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**Cover Story**

## TEAM SHARK ROCKS!

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# SOF

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE

Support the Troops!

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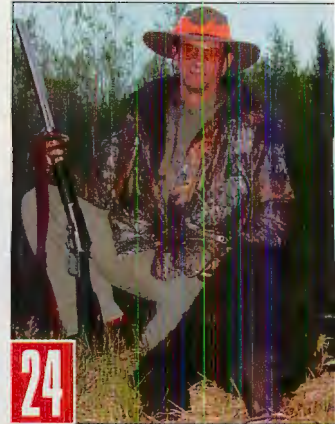
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courtesy Phil Otto

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The third biggest coalition military force in Iraq after the U.S. and UK? Private contractors, such as Team Shark, security operators for Custer Battles. So far, it's been a tough job, magnificently done — but some pay the ultimate price. **Story on page 20.**



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courtesy LCDR John Love, MD



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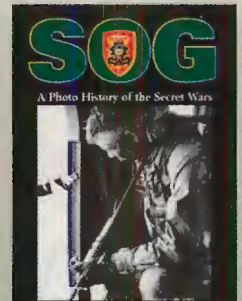
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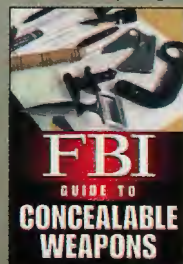
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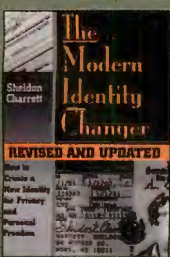
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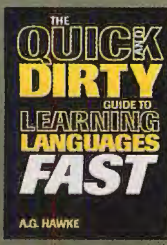


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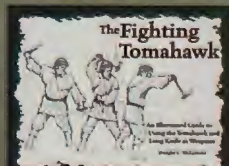
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### **Unfortunate Accuracy**

I had a subscription to SOF for many years. I remember Mr. R. Brown stating that terrorism will increase in this world and eventually in the USA. Maybe I am talking about the early seventies. How right he was, I put him on the scale of Nostradamus. Exactly what he predicted has occurred. I do not know if Mr. Brown is still alive (I really hope he is; tough patriots like him usually live to a ripe old age) my only regret is that we never had him as a president of this wayward country. We need no bullshit patriots like him to show the world what we are all about. Mr. Brown, you were always right on the money with your predictions. May God bless you if you are still with us and also if you have left us. I for one will never forget what you had predicted, and can only hope these mindless idiots in power would act upon your wisdom.

God bless you,  
V-Vet Joe Luka

*Joe: Yeah, I'm still around "rousing the rabble" and have every intention of continuing to do so till I buy the farm ... thanx for your kind words and don't forget to vote?*

### **Sweet Sunset**

Ding Dong "the Ban" is dead! A BIG THANKS to SOF for consistently publishing the unfiltered truth about individual firearms ownership, tactics and news on the war on terrorism. I have never been in the military or in law enforcement, but I'm an avid reader of SOF because I know I'll get the REAL story, told by the soldier and law enforcement professional whose boots are on the ground (rather than by some talking-head on TV who doesn't know an AR-15 from an RPG). American citizens are knee deep in the war on terror, and SOF provides a valuable perspective on the war overseas, as well as here at home. Most of all, as law-abiding gun owners, my wife and I value SOF's unwavering support of the Second Amendment. I learn something every time I get a new issue of SOF. Keep up the good work! God bless America and our troops!

Via e-mail

### **Old Soldiers Recycled**

In regards to your picture of Muqtada al-sadr's followers in Iraq using the MP-44 assault rifle: This weapon didn't disappear after WWII. The Yugoslavian army used it until the early 1980's, mainly in their paratroopers. It was also seen in Somalia in the late 1970's.

Kyle Estep

### **What? Media Slant?**

I'm getting a LOT of e-mails like this one, from folks in-country, "ranting" against the media's depiction of the war. A bunch of VERY angry boys and girls are coming home, with a life-long hatred of our media. This is from a Marine 1/Lt (captain selectee) friend of mine. She just turned 35 years old yesterday. What you don't hear from the media is what the folks on the ground in-country have to say. Here it is:

Semper Fi, Paul

Hello again from Iraq! ... I'm sure most of you heard about the [7] Devil Dogs that were killed here today by the suicide bomber. It was a bad day here ... a very bad day for the Marine Corps... there are plenty of angry Marines in the Fallujah area and we all want a little payback. Our Doctor, who is a Navy Commander, went to the hospital to assist with the casualties. He said that it was a heart-wrenching sight ... Marines from their battalion were really broken up. Please pray for those Marines and for the families of those killed.

The terrorist scum are more evil then even I had imagined. They continue to progress in their acts of violence. They intimidate and scare the poor people here so much so, that they are afraid to work with us — afraid to take charge of their destinies and succeed. It makes our work very difficult...very frustrating.

For those detractors who asked where the waving Iraqi's are ... I would say they are still here. Still wanting a free Iraq. Unfortunately, if they support us, they will be killed...their whole family will be killed. We are currently working with an interpreter who lost her whole family!

I will get off of my soapbox for now ... I haven't had a good rant in a while! I guess I want you all to see the precarious nature of the fight. The media DOES have it very, very wrong. Heck, I guess I figure that if I'm withstanding rocket attacks continually, I've earned the right to spout my position about the fight we're in.

The days are going pretty fast here. I just hope it continues. I miss you all! (I also miss my Mickey D's and pizza and M&Ms) Counting the days until March! Jodie

### **Some Reporters Get It Right**

I'm the public affairs/combat camera chief for the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and just wanted to thank you for highlighting our unit. I wrote the story and took the photos that appear on the cover and pages 42-47 of the October 2004 edition of SOF Mag.

It was a real boost to the unit's morale to have our story told and to know that although we're headed home, our accomplishments and service will be remembered.

Sincerely,  
GySgt Keith Milks  
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## Why Not?

Hello, I work at MCLB Albany, Georgia, where most of the armor plating for our Marines and soldiers is being built and assembled. It has been released that MajGen N. Ross Thompson III, of the Army's Tank-automotive and Armaments Command was upset by the command at Ft. Steward for purchasing the armor kits from the Marine Corps. Seems the positive reaction for the Marine Corps got to him and he attempted to stop the purchase for purely personal reasons. It was too late though, the order was paid for and kits were being delivered, to save our troopers lives. So, maybe the MajGen. can find work elsewhere?

Preston Luke, Former USMC. I/8 Beirut, Lebanon. '83.

## Stryker Supporter

SOF, I am a SPC currently serving in Iraq with the 2-3 INF Stryker battalion. I have talked at length with my squad leaders and platoon sergeant, who have seen duty in both the Stryker and the 113. They say that the vehicles are best suited for different applications and that comparing the two is apples and oranges. The Stryker in an urban setting is far superior, in my opinion. It is a very quiet vehicle. The suspension and turning radius make it nimble enough to handle rush hour traffic (and I must say Iraqis are not the most courteous drivers). The vehicle has ample speed and the fuel economy has not hindered any mission I know of thus far. Survivability in the Stryker has been outstanding: Except on a few occasions the extent of the damage has been superficial—flat tires, holes in slat armor, minor armor damage. The

Stryker has seen everything from small arms to car bombs and kept on rolling. As for ride, it's immaculate: at least two of us have to stand at all times when moving and extended travel is still quite comfortable.

For the 113, my superiors say that it indeed shines off-road, as it does not tip as easy and has more surface traction, they say the tracks have more durability on unforgiving surfaces. It has very good fuel economy. It can maneuver in extremely tight places. It is also very good when employing mortars. But the Stryker has performed every task that has been required of it exceptionally well. All the soldiers that I know and work with are very happy to be using Strykers. As for your comparison, it seems like you are reaching for something that isn't there. While the 113 has its good qualities my fellow soldiers and I think the chain of command chose the right vehicle for the job.

Respectfully,  
SPC Chad Salvino

## So Many Tyrants, So Little Time...

Shalom:

I would like to know what is being done to fight the sexual abuses by "colonel" Qaddafi of Libya, the war criminal who has sent tens of thousands of innocents to death since his reign of terror began in 1969. He is the most heinous of all human rights abusers and should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of international law.

Thanks for your time,  
Rabbi Tobin

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## The Edsel-16?

My question is how many more decades, millions of dollars and how many more soldiers lives do we want to waste before we finally get rid of that 40 year old Edsel Colt is selling. H&K is developing new stuff all the time even improvements on the basic M-16 — their new gas system is promising but not enough to overcome all the weapon's shortcomings. What has Colt developed lately? I am for more jobs in America for Americans, but not at the cost of unsuitable tools for our soldiers (I am currently an Army Reserve Quartermaster). My opinion is that no soldier should go into harm's way without the right tools or training for any job he might be called on to do. Basic to all soldiers should be two handguns, one shotgun and what ever bladed weapons he likes. Soldiers doing CQB or vehicle crews should have a sub gun, MPs good handcuffs, good impact weapon, Taser weapons, pepper spray, and etc.

Kirk E. Chartier  
Scottsville, KY

## Vent Away!

Why do we (U.S.) always beat a dead horse with money? Just read the after-action report on the 507 Maintenance Company: Once again the M16 let the troops down. This weapon should never have seen service. A weapon this hard to keep clean should be kept in a gallery. How are the troops to fight out of ambushes with a 3 shot burst? Go HK-6.8! When our boys go in they need good, well thought-out equipment. The Hummer is a Puff job at the cost of three jeep's, but

where's the beef? Because they can, they set-off IED blasts for the TV, and we let the problem out smart us once again. I'm sorry to vent but I have one in service, and they deserve better.

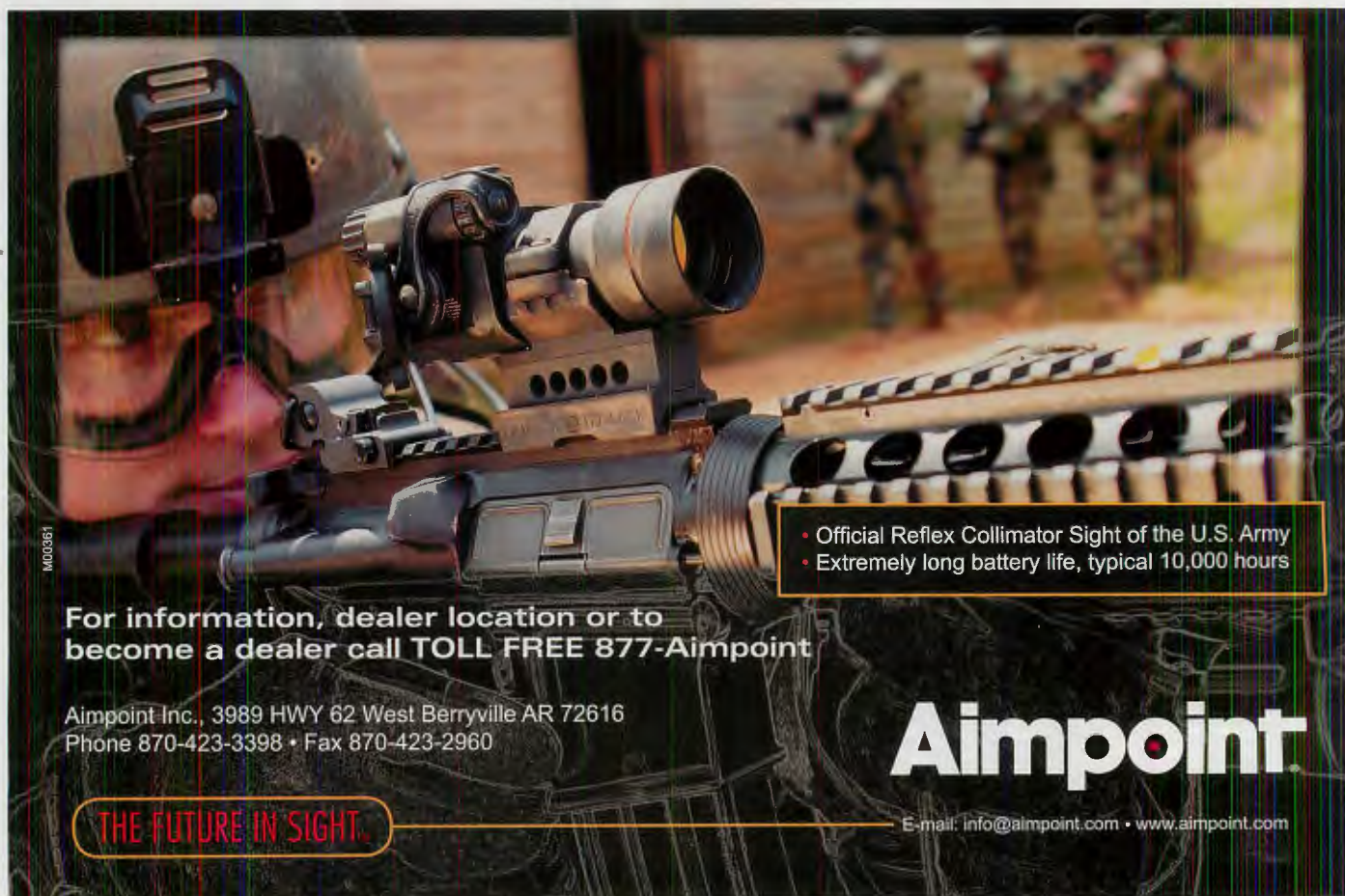
## High and Tight: A Poor Disguise

I've been a subscriber to *SOF* for several years and a reader since '77. I have gained a lot of knowledge and insight from reading *SOF*. I was greatly influenced to join the Army National Guard at age 34 and went through basic and AIT at Ft. Benning, Ga. and was an 11C. As a result my son was *also* influenced to serve his country in the Army. He has now been in for 12 years, and is currently in Iraq in the 5th SFG. Needless to say, I am extremely proud of my son. However I received an e-mail from him telling me that some conventional general has ordered them to cease all operations, because he wants them to look like every other soldier there. No blending in to give themselves any kind of an edge over the bad guys. They have to shave their beards and wear DCUs. We certainly wouldn't want to confuse our enemy, would we? What in the world is wrong with the leadership (?) of our military? This really has me upset. Thanks, please omit my name.

## But...

I love the mag, but there are not enough dissenting views in regards to current military structure, command and preparedness. Too many "toe the line" articles. Give the articles

*Continued on page 81*



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# BULLETIN BOARD

## Rent.com: Breaks for GIS

Members of the military seeking apartment housing off-base can access a convenient and comprehensive search engine on the Internet, and can save time and money comparing apartments and rental rates from more than 4.1 million apartments with its new military search feature at <http://www.rent.com/apartments>. In addition to Rent.com's free service, the Company will reward members of the military with \$100 when a lease is completed.

"Tell us what base your serving at and we'll provide you with the closest listings for you to comparison shop. Then make your lease through Rent.com and we'll reward you with \$100," said Scott Ingraham, CEO of Rent.com. Check 'em out!

## "Assault-Weapon" [sic] Ban Sunsets

The infamous "Assault Weapon" ban has died a natural death. Written into the bill when it was passed 10 years ago was an automatic sunset clause, wherein if this ill-advised piece of legislation did not perform well enough to convince solons of today that it was worth renewing, it would become void. Thanks to legions of gun owners pointing out to their elected representatives that banning such cosmetic items as pistol-grips, flash-hiders and bayonet lugs on rifles is silly, and the magazine capacity of a firearm has nothing to do with whether it is a criminal hand that loads it into a gun, this onerous piece of legislation is no longer law. Good-bye, and good riddance.

For further information on how the removal of this federal law from the books affects individual gun ownership, go to: <http://www.atf.gov/firearms/saw-factsheet.htm>

## Why We Need to Ban Guns

Having lost the law that protected us from pistol grips, flash hiders or even (*horrors!*) a bayonet lug, we would like to be at the forefront of the movement to ban all guns. As a public service, we offer the following rationale:

1. Banning guns works, which is why New York City, Washington DC and Chicago cops need guns.
2. Washington DC's low murder rate of 69 per 100,000 is due to strict gun control, and Indianapolis' high murder rate of 9 per 100,000 is due to the lack of gun control.

## CORRECTION

The First Place photo published in our August 2004 issue (SOF Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom Photo Contest) was incorrectly credited. The actual photograph is by ©2003 David Leeson/  
*The Dallas Morning News.*

## Mustard Gas Killed The Cat



Courtesy Stephen J. Eakle, Global Protection LLC

USAF EOD men from Dover AFB were investigating a WWI artillery projectile found among the clam shells used to pave a private driveway and one airman ended up in Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, with second degree burns, apparently from mustard agent.

Nearly 100 assorted devices were found in Sussex County driveways between February and April alone, according to state police — including 14 hand grenades found at a chicken farm. The ordnance was dumped at sea long ago, and is now being dredged up by clam harvesters. Clam shells are commonly used to cover driveways, and these rusting, deadly delights come through the process and are dumped with the clam shells. These and similar pieces of vintage ordnance are not paperweights. If you come across such items, no matter what the venue, contact local law enforcement.

3. Statistics showing high murder rates justify gun control. But statistics showing increasing murder rates after gun control are "just statistics."
4. The Brady Bill and the Assault Weapons Ban, both of which went into effect in 1994, are responsible for the decrease in violent crime rates, which have been declining since 1991.
5. We must get rid of guns because a deranged lunatic may go on a shooting spree at any time and anyone who would own a gun out of fear of such a lunatic is paranoid.
6. The more helpless you are, the safer you are from criminals.
7. An intruder will be incapacitated by tear gas or oven spray, but if shot with a .357 Magnum will get angry and kill you.
8. A woman raped and strangled is morally superior to a



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The quotation by Thomas Paine, "If there is trouble let it be in my day so that my child may have peace," has been embroidered above the artwork and serves as inspiration during unsettled times. The painting expresses our hope for new beginnings and the "Spirit of America" in flight with our pilots. This outstanding original jacket is available **exclusively** from Neil Cooper USA until April 30, 2005.

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## BULLETIN BOARD

woman with a smoking gun and a dead rapist at her feet.

9. When confronted by violent criminals, you should “put up no defense — give them what they want, or run” (Handgun Control, Inc. Chairman Pete Shields, *Guns Don't Die-People Do*, 1981, p. 125).

10. *The New England Journal of Medicine* is filled with expert advice about guns; just like *Guns and Ammo* has some excellent treatises on heart surgery.

11. One should consult an automotive engineer for safer seatbelts, a civil engineer for a better bridge, a surgeon for internal medicine, a computer programmer for hard drive problems, and Sarah Brady for firearms expertise.

12. The 2nd Amendment, ratified in 1787, refers to the National Guard, which was created 130 years later, in 1917.

13. The National Guard, federally funded, with bases on federal land, using federally owned weapons, vehicles, buildings, and uniforms, punishing trespassers under federal law, is a “State” militia.

14. These phrases: “right of the people to peaceably assemble,” “right of the people to be secure in their homes,” “enumerations herein of certain rights shall not be construed to disparage others retained by the people,” and “The powers not delegated herein are reserved to the states respectively, and to the people” all refer to individuals. But “the right of the people to keep and bear arms” refers to the state.

15. “The Constitution is strong and will never change.” But we should ban and seize all guns thereby violating the 2nd, 4th, and 5th amendments of that Constitution.

16. Rifles and handguns aren't necessary to national

defense. Of course, that's why the U.S. armed forces have millions of them.

17. Private citizens shouldn't have handguns because they are not “military weapons.” But private citizens shouldn't have “assault rifles” because they are military weapons.

18. In spite of waiting periods, background checks, fingerprinting, government forms, etc. guns today are too readily available, which is responsible for recent school shootings. In the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's, anyone could buy guns at hardware stores, army surplus stores, gas stations, variety stores, Sears mail order, with no waiting, no background checks, no fingerprints, no government forms, and there were no school shootings.

19. The NRA's attempt to run a “don't touch” campaign about kids handling guns is propaganda, but the anti-gun lobby's attempt to run a “don't touch” campaign is responsible social activity.

20. Guns are so complex that special training is necessary to use them properly, and so simple that they make murder easy.

21. A handgun, with up to four controls, is far too complex for the typical adult to learn to use, as opposed to an automobile that only has 20.

22. Women are just as intelligent and capable as men, but a woman with a gun is “an accident waiting to happen” and gun makers' advertisements aimed at women are “preying on their fears.”

23. Ordinary people in the presence of guns turn into slaughtering butchers, but revert to normal when the weapon is removed.

24. Guns cause violence, which is why there are so many

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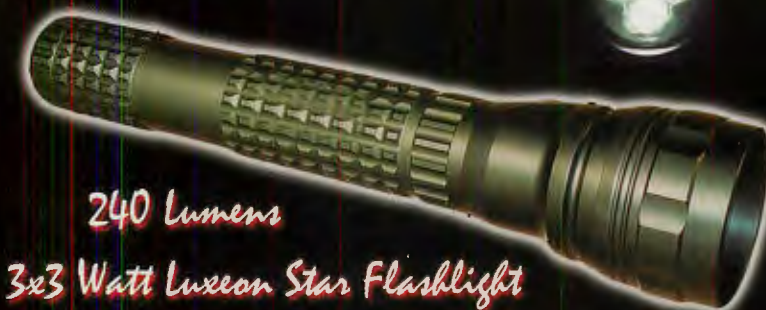
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## June 2004 Hayden, Idaho Airshow

"Old Yeller" was its name. And it wasn't any old dog. It was a totally restored P-51D, one of World War II's best fighters. It looked sleek and mean just like it was meant to be when it was designed by North American Aviation in the late '30's. With a combat radius of 750 miles (with two drop fuel tanks), a top speed of 445 MPH at 25,000 feet and six .50 caliber machine guns, it gave the pilots the wherewithal to defeat the enemy as they flew support for allied bombers.

Most of the flyers of these wonderful war birds are former military pilots trained by the government. John Bagley, owner and pilot of "Old Yeller" tried to join the Air Force, but failed to pass the physical. But that did not stop him from pursuing his dream (all you non-military readers please take note).

John loved flying, having flown his first plane in high school when he was only 17, an Interstate J-3000. Through the years he has accumulated more than 5,000 hours in the air, flying such aircraft as the Beach Staggerwing, Douglas TBM Avenger, Skyraider of Viet Nam fame, P-40 Warhawk, Hawker Sea Fury, P-63 King Cobra and of course, the P-51, to name just a few.

In 1995, John was flying a North American T-28 when it caught on fire and blew up. Ten days later, with the gauze still



Photo and caption: Alan Brown

covering his hands, he climbed up into the cockpit of his 195 and went flying.

You may catch John and his P-51 performing aerobatic routines at various air shows across the country and at the Reno Air Races in Nevada.

mass killings at gun shows.

25. A majority of the population supports gun control, just like a majority of the population supported owning slaves.

26. Any self-loading small arm can legitimately be considered a "weapon of mass destruction," or an "assault weapon."

27. Most people can't be trusted, so we should have laws against guns, which all criminals will abide by because they

can be trusted.

28. The right of Internet pornographers to exist cannot be questioned because it is constitutionally protected by the Bill of Rights, but the use of handguns for self-defense is not really protected by the Bill of Rights.

*Continued on page 75*

Injured/unconscious man cannot fall out when using the X-strap Kit.

photo courtesy of militiamyons.com



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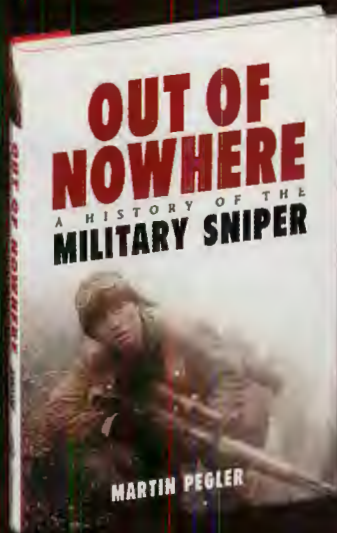




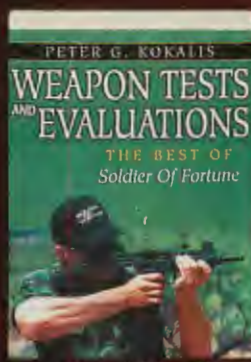
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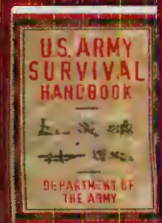
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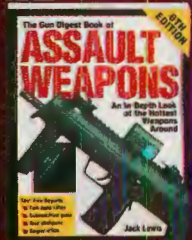
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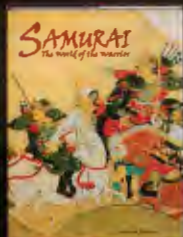
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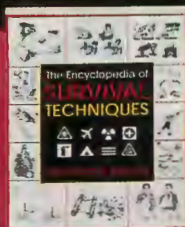


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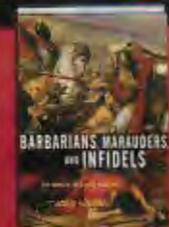




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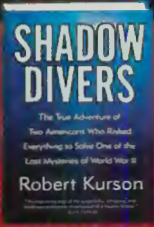
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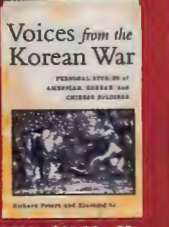
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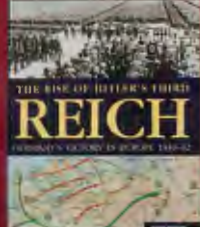
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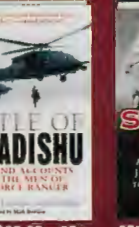
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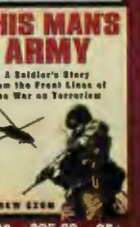
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# TEAM SHARK ROCKS!

*"I Immediately Engaged Them With My AK,  
Sending Most Of My 7.62x39 Love To  
The RPG-Wielding Individual."*

BY PHIL OTTO







**MY** first two weeks as a Security Operator (SO) in Iraq went by fairly uneventfully, if you don't mind 120-degree plus heat, sand storms and the ever-present chance of being blown away by an improvised explosive device. It was my good fortune to be assigned to a solid team of about ten operators. Our task was to escort convoys from the southern port city of Umm Qasr to Abu Ghraib, which is northwest of Baghdad.

This mission normally requires the Security Operators to convoy alone to Umm Qasr, down Iraqi Highway One, near Najaf and Basra, in Suburbans or similar SUV's. This was the safest portion of the trip, as we had no cargo, which allowed us to run — with guns at the ready — at nearly one hundred miles per hour the whole way down, except for picking our way through Baghdad and other populated areas.

My newfound profession became addictively risky on the next mission. My team, lead by Shark — I'll refer to my colleagues exclusively by radio call sign — and accompanied by ten other Security Operators, started making runs from Baghdad and Abu Ghraib up Main Supply Route Tampa, or Iraqi Highway One, all the way to the Syrian border.

At that time, this area, north and west of Baghdad, seemed almost another country, a more secure country, in comparison with southern Iraq. Recent events, however, have proven otherwise. On one mission my team came under attack not once, but twice, on one run up north and back.

Team Shark had been tasked to escort twenty tractor-trailers from Abu Ghraib, and to deliver them safely to an unnamed forward operating base in the vicinity of Tikrit, northwest of Baghdad.

We were also to bring them back to Abu Ghraib on our return trip, again with as little damage, and as safely, as possible. Without saying too much about our tactics — bad guys read SOF too — we strategically placed our SUV's among the twenty cargo trucks. My position on this trip was to cover our six from the rear vehicle.

My equipment included the usual level III body armor,

with ballistic plates, and a BlackHawk tactical load-bearing vest, with as much ammunition as it is humanly possible to carry. My primary weapon was an RPK, a beefed up AK-47 (7.62x39), and my sidearm was a Browning High Power (9mm).

I also chose to carry my issue M4 shorty and an AK-47 with collapsible stock, so I figured I was well armed for our walk in the sun. An operator will find himself in many different environments on any given mission, and you figure one weapon system may not be the best for every situation.

Everyone else in the team carried the standard M4 shorty, and a Glock or Browning as a sidearm. Almost everyone had a secondary weapon, an AK-47 or MP5 (9mm), depending on their assigned position and seating in their vehicle. The reason for using 5.56 and 9 mm weapons as standard issue is availability of ammo. Not by coincidence, the U.S. Military uses the same ammo, so it's not hard to find.

### Scanning for Baddies

On this particular morning Team Shark headed out on our route towards Tikrit. About five minutes into this expedition, as I scanned the Baghdad traffic out my rear window, we come under an overpass. A deafening explosion rocked the SUV, causing a concussion that squeezed, then released, my guts.

I turned towards the front for a second. Blinding dust and debris flew across the hood of our vehicle. I turned to cover my assigned sector, scanning the traffic stacked up to our rear, searching for a target. I expected an ambush any second.

Craftsman, seated in the front passenger seat, laughed. He said, "Hey Sandman, did you see the hood of that car fly in front of us?" He swore it was the hood of a 1978 Fiat. Not, mind you, a 1979, or any other year, a '78.

Quickly, we assessed that only two cargo trucks had sustained damage. The Security Operators, on the other hand, were temporarily deaf.

Shark ordered us to continue our mission. Somehow, the Big Guy Upstairs took care of us, and we made it through that incident unscathed.

The explosion was caused by a VBIED (vehicle borne improvised explosive device) traveling in the opposite lanes, forty meters from us. We were a target of opportunity.

Twenty minutes later we found ourselves, and twenty

*(opposite) Left to right: Craftsman, Shark, Cuda, the author, and BamBam in front of an SUV with the windows still intact. (above) The team zeroes weapons at the Special Operations Command range near Baghdad.*



tractor-trailers, locked in Baghdad traffic, in a part of the city reminiscent of the Black Hawk Down scenario. Being in the rear vehicle, with no other SO vehicles in view, felt awfully lonely. Realizing there is no air, no armor, and no troop support makes for an instant reality check.

We fared well for about two minutes, and then the local kids and market shoppers noticed there were Americans with guns in SUV's, and no military support in sight.



*Sandman, the author, carries an M4, with Shark, armed with a modified AK, in Abu Ghraib. (below) Team Shark takes security positions while halted for emergency repairs.*

This is a situation where being extremely vigilant, noticing the small actions, or lack of actions by the local populace, is critical. To use deadly force or not, that is the question. Most of the adults only threw stares or gestures. The kids started heaving stones at us.

Luckily no one lost his cool.

### **An Unwelcome Situation**

Shark and some other operators dismounted from a vehicle ahead. Shark advanced two steps toward the crowd, completely gamefaced. He had his weapon at port arms, non-threatening. But he locked eyes with the crowd, and they paused to re-evaluate whether or not to throw rocks at the Infidel. Two other operators stopped the traffic around us.

And we got the hell out of there. We may have been there only two minutes, but anyone with experience knows it takes only one second for things to go deadly wrong.

The rest of our movement towards Tikrit took us through or near the most dangerous places in Iraq, Samara, Balad, and, depending on the exact route, near or through Falluja and Ar Ramadi. Fortunately this time without incident.

As always, one of the tractor-trailers broke down, and we found ourselves on the worst road in Iraq for a certain amount of time, waiting for a quick repair. Fortunately, this was little more than a rest stop.

Reaching Tikrit, we debriefed our movement among ourselves, and briefed the return trip for the next day. Shark and I located the intelligence section of the unit we were delivering to, and got what we could as far as info on the area we were to travel through the following morning. Then we staged the trucks for the return trip, and bedded down for the evening.

The following morning we made the usual check of our vehicles and tractor-trailers, for explosive devices and proper fuel. We also made sure no extra drivers had joined the convoy for the trip back.

Our job does not include convoy management or fueling, but we did not want to break down, or run out of gas, in the middle of Balad, or have someone sneak a firecracker into the middle of our convoy.

On the road back to Abu Ghraib, we came to a point just north of Balad, about forty minutes northwest of Baghdad.

*Continued on page 77*





# FORCE PROJECTION

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*This Marlin conversion nicknamed "The Master Guide," comes in .457 Wild West Magnum/.45-70 and is topped off with a Leupold 2.5x IER Scope with Wild West Scout scope base and Warne OR rings.*

# The Rifles Of Wild West Guns

*Be Afraid. Be Very Afraid. If You're A Bear, That Is.*

"Up

here, you don't go into the woods without a gun," Gunsmith Jim West told me as we discussed the bears that roam the Alaskan wilderness. Not that there's anything wrong with that of course. It's just another example of prudent people taking sensible precautions to protect themselves against the local predators, which, in the wilds of Alaska, are more likely to be four legged bruins with a healthy appetite and an aggressive personality, than two-legged muggers.

BY JOHN HIGGS

A bear requires strong medicine to adjust his attitude. Although a .50 BMG will get the job done, it isn't practical for most people who frequent Alaska's wilderness to be hauling one around while they are out backpacking, hunting, flying a small plane, or tending to the ranch. So if you want a firearm that will decisively put down an aggressive bear, but also be light enough and compact enough to fit behind the seat of your pickup truck, in your back pack, or under the seat of your bush plane, where do you go?

You go and see gunsmith Jim West of Wild West Guns. He's made a career out of customizing rifles and pistols for the express purpose of self-defense in the wilderness.

*SOF Editor/Publisher Robert Brown admires Jim West's 9-foot bear guarding West's hunting/fishing lodge, Copper Center, Alaska. Brown holds a .457 CoPilot; West, a .50 Alaskan CoPilot. West carries a 1911 Custom Colt, chambered for .460 Rowland. Brown sports a pair of Danner boots, which he swears by. He has worn Danners from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.*



Alan Brown





(left) Rich Lucibella, publisher of *S.W.A.T.* magazine, hunted with Brown and Bob Walker, of Walker Game ears; used a .50 Alaskan to whack his bear in Canada. He commented, "this was a bit much gun but I was anxious to take it to the field." (right) Brown found the CoPilot to be easy to handle from the confines of a tree stand. The "take down" capability facilitated easy movement through airports. Brown saves what's left of his hearing with a pair of Walker's Cammo Quad Muffs.

### Alaskan CoPilot by Jim West

"The CoPilot was designed by us to fill the need for a compact, easy-to-carry and powerful survival and hunting tool. We emphasize reliability, quality craftsmanship and accuracy to make this rifle the ultimate all-around package," Jim West told us.

The flagship of the Wild West Guns fleet, the CoPilot starts out as an off-the-rack Marlin 1895 lever action rifle in caliber .45-70 Government, and they are converted to .57 magnum or .50 Alaskan if the customer wants it chambered in .50 Alaskan, the following must be done by an expert gunsmith. The rifle is completely disassembled and all the parts are inspected and either fine-tuned or replaced with precision parts. The next step is to convert the rifle to a takedown. This is done by separating the barrel and the tubular magazine from the receiver and then machining a receiver extension from a block of high-grade steel. This block is attached to the rear of the handguard and allows the whole front-end of the rifle forward of the receiver to be attached and detached by unscrewing a thumbscrew under the front end of the magazine, pulling the magazine forward out of the receiver, and then unscrewing the barrel. This system, with its tight tolerances, locks up exactly the same each time, and with the correct headspace. There is no need to re-zero the rifle after taking it down.

The barrel is then cut to 16.5, 18, or 20 inches in length, ported to reduce recoil and recrowned. The two pieces of the rifle can then be stored in a 21-inch-long carrying case. A light-gathering fiber optic hooded front sight with ghost ring rear is added for fast target acquisition, particularly on anything that resembles bear fur. The action is modified and tuned, and chambered to accept the new .457 Wild West Magnum cartridge. In .457, it is still able to accept not only

the venerable .45-70 cartridge, but also the .410 shotshell. This makes it a truly versatile wilderness survival gun. The trigger is then set to a crisp three-pound pull. The buttstock is cut to the customer's length of pull and finished with a Pachmayer decelerator pad. The factory receiver already comes drilled and tapped for a scope.

### Winchester 1895 Take Down

In 1908, the last full year of his second term as President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt began to plan an African safari for the following year. An avid hunter and outdoorsman, Roosevelt was highly enthusiastic about Winchester rifles. In his 1885 book *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* he writes, "... a repeater or magazine gun is as much superior to a single or double barreled breech-loader as the latter is to a muzzle-loader." And so it was that in June, 1908 he wrote the first of many letters to T.G. Bennett, vice president of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, to determine the specifications of the rifles that Roosevelt planned to take on safari to Africa. The President already owned a Winchester Model 86 lever action in .45-70 caliber, which he thought he might use for lion despite the warnings he had received from friends about it being unsuitable for large African game.

In a July 1908 letter to Winchester he asked, "How will the penetration of the full metal covered bullet for this .45-70 rifle compare with the penetration of the similar full-jacketed bullet for the .405?" Winchester recommended the .405 WCF over the .45-70 citing, "muzzle energy of 3077 foot-pounds, almost twice that of the .45-70-405." [.45 caliber, 70 grains of smokeless powder, 405 grain Lead, Soft Point, or Jacketed bullet] The rifle also differed from previous Winchester models in that it had a box magazine rather than





*The Alaskan CoPilot (above) shown with optional Kevlar stock, hard chrome finish and scout scope system. This take-down rifle conversion comes in 16.5, 18.5 or 20-inch barrel length. (left) Brown was pleased with his group at 50 yards "I even had a witness," he chuckled. He went on to say, "I reckon this is good enough for government work."*

John Higgins



er of this particular caliber. The rifle had a brisk, but manageable recoil off the bench as it launched the 300-grain Hornady soft-point bullets downrange at around 2200 fps. We were pleasantly surprised to find that it came already sighted in from Wild West Guns. It took a couple of seconds to figure out how to load the fixed box magazine, which requires that the cartridge be slid backwards under the magazine lips before pushing the bullet end down until it clicks into place. We also discovered that the 19th century design of the action would allow us to press the trigger and drop the hammer with the safety on, without actually firing the cartridge. With the safety in the Off position, the rifle fed and

the customary tubular magazine. This design change allowed for use of more powerful cartridges using the newly introduced smokeless powder and pointed "Spitzer" type bullets, which could not be safely loaded into tubular magazines because the rifle's recoil would drive the pointed bullet into the primer of the cartridge in front, causing a chain reaction inside the magazine. For this reason, only cartridges loaded with flat point bullets should be loaded into any tubular magazine — ever. Roosevelt decided to take two Model 95 lever-action Winchester rifles in .405 WCF caliber to Africa.

Almost a century later, the same Winchester Model 95 lever action rifle that accompanied President Roosevelt to Africa is still available: One of them, a takedown model is customized by Wild West Guns. We took it to the range to sight it in with some factory .405 WCF ammunition supplied to us by the nice folks at Hornady, the only domestic suppli-

### Alaskan CoPilot

#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

<b>Caliber:</b>	.45-70, Wild West .457 magnum or .50 Alaskan
<b>Type of Firearm:</b>	Take Down, based on Marlin model 1895 Lever Action, side ejection
<b>Barrel Length:</b>	16.5, 18, or 20 inches
<b>Overall Length:</b>	Minimum 35 inches
<b>Weight:</b>	Minimum 6.5 lbs
<b>Feed device:</b>	Tubular magazine
<b>Safety:</b>	Manual Crossbolt
<b>Sights:</b>	Front: Williams Fire Sight in red with skeletonized hood
	Rear: Wild West Guns Ghost Ring (receiver also drilled and tapped for scope)
<b>Finish:</b>	Parkerized or bead-blasted stainless





(above) West, who runs an upscale fishing/hunting lodge near Copper Center, Alaska, jokes, "the fish are so big up here you have to shoot 'em to get 'em in the boat. I never use a landing net." Here, West pops the soon-to-be dinner with a round from his .460 Rowland 1911 Colt Classic conversion.

(right) The Brown brothers and dinner. And the big one got away. "Yes, it's disgusting, sickening, upsetting, etc., that my brother, Alan, (right) caught both of the fish. Ah, well."



fired flawlessly. Due to the pumpkin-on-a-post front sight and the notch rear iron sight, we lost a little of the potential accuracy that could be wrung out of this piece if it had had a decent scope mounted on it, although this author managed to put two holes of a three shot group touching on the target on our initial sight-in at 25 yards.

#### Other Offerings From Wild West Guns

##### MODEL 04 LEVER ACTION RIFLE

Chambering powerful revolver cartridges in a lever action rifle isn't a new idea, it goes back to the 19th century when cowboys and hunters alike wanted to carry one caliber of ammunition for both revolver and rifle. Over a century later, you can do the same thing with the current crop of powerhouse revolver cartridges and Wild West's new 04 lever action chambered for the mighty .500 S&W, .500 Linebaugh, .480 Ruger, .475 Linebaugh, or .454 Casull. Among other features, the rifle comes with 17-4PH Stainless, Heavy Duty, CNC-machined receiver; 16.5 or 18.5 inch barrel, wood or synthetic stock, and tuned action. It can be ordered in either takedown or standard configuration.

##### SUMMIT RIFLES

For regular hunting activities at higher elevations, Wild West Guns produces their range of lightweight Summit Rifles for mountain hunters. The heart of this rifle is either a Winchester or Remington Short Action. The action is stripped, examined, and, if necessary, squared for proper functioning, and the bolt is lightened in non-critical areas.

#### Winchester New Model 1895 Take Down

##### **SPECIFICATIONS**

<b>Caliber:</b>	.405 WCF
<b>Type of Firearm:</b>	Take Down Lever Action, top ejection
<b>Barrel Length:</b>	Various available
<b>Overall Length:</b>	Varies with bbl length
<b>Weight:</b>	8.25 lbs approx
<b>Feed Device:</b>	Box Magazine
<b>Sights:</b>	Various available

Then they add a match-grade barrel that is fluted. This reduces weight, aids in cooling, and imparts additional rigidity to the barrel to enhance accuracy. The barrel is then cryogenically treated to relieve stress. A Timney trigger set to 3 pounds, lightweight Kevlar stock with heavy recoil pad, and West's own Alaska Magnum Muzzle Brake complete the setup. Depending on the length of the barrel, the rifle weighs in at about 4-5 1/2 pounds.

##### BUSHWACKER

What do you get if you cross a big handgun with a rifle? Answer: The Bushwacker. Wild West Guns takes its lever-action rifle chambered in either .457 Magnum or .50 Alaskan and whacks the barrel off to 12" or 14" in length. Both a full stock and just a pistol grip are supplied, to give the customer the option of a short rifle or what could best be described as a lever-action pistol. The usual features of ghost-ring rear and fiber optic front sights come with the tuned action, ported barrel and choice of blue or Parkerized finish. Billed as the Ultimate Bear Defense, or Police Entry Gun, it's the perfect choice for cramped places where a longer firearm would get hung up — like maybe flushing out a bear in a phone booth. (As a short-barreled rifle, the Bushwacker is available through NFA ["Class Three"] dealers.)

##### .457 WILD WEST MAGNUM AND .50 ALASKAN AMMUNITION

It's been said many times that when hunting dangerous game you should "Use enough gun." In addition, you should use enough bullet. Jim West and his crew realized a long time ago that the .45-70 cartridge may be a tad light for some close encounters with big animals, so they lengthened the .45-70 case by almost .165 inch and came up with the .457 Wild West Magnum, a cartridge that has better performance and higher pressure (about 40,000 psi) than the .45-70. A rifle chambered for the .457 will still accept the .45-70 cartridge. They turned to Alaska Bullet Works, makers of the Kodiak bullet, to supply a heavy-jacket .45 caliber bullet that will penetrate deeply, expand reliably, and maintain its weight. The result is a cartridge that delivers a 350-grain Kodiak

*Continued on page 79*



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

FARNAM'S GUNSLINGER DIARY ♦ BY JOHN FARNAM

## News From a Friend In-Country:

"None of us are thrilled with the situation politicians have handed us. We want to finish it, once and for all, so insurgents will be unable to wreak their work, again.

"We were involved in the action near the cemetery, outside the mosque.

Insurgents charged us in full, banzai fashion. It was a big mistake!

You've heard about Marines and their rifles? Well, it's true. My unit killed over three hundred of them. Flanking units annihilated many more. I saw them lying in heaps. Then, the word came to 'push them all the way back.' We gingerly advanced through the cemetery, pushing the remnants back to the mosque. There is an open area between the cemetery and the mosque. The Air Force dropped about a half dozen five-hundred pounders on them. What few survived became disoriented and moved right back at us. None survived. We wiped them out!

"Toward the end of the third day, my M4 jammed (double feed) twice. I was not happy. Fortunately, by buds covered. We devote a lot of time toward keeping weapons clean, not enough apparently! In any event, we took on the best they had and handed them a decisive defeat. We had several wounded, but they refused to go to the rear. All stayed in the fight. They are now all patched up and back with us.

"Bottom line: insurgents know they can't beat us. Heaven knows they tried!

The only way they can win is through propaganda."

*Lessons: Mass charges will never be successful against American firepower. Japanese, NVA (in my day), and now the Islamic extremists have all learned that painful lesson. Competent and courageous riflemen, machine gunners, and even pistoleros will dependably annihilate disjointed stampedes every time.*

*Radical Islamic extremists are now facing the same dilemma that was faced by the Viet Cong and NVA a generation ago. What can't be won on the battlefield can be won on the cutting floors of CBS, ABC, NBC, and CNN. The bastards did it to us before!*

*The Stoner System, as manifested in the M16/M4, does not do well in airborne grit. Constant maintenance is required of any rifle in a military situation, but, for the Stoner, it is particularly critical. The other big issue is the extractor spring. It breaks frequently and must be inspected constantly. The D-ring really helps in this regard. Highly recommended!*

## From A Friend Currently In Baghdad:

"There are six rules here [Baghdad]. You won't read them in any manual, but I personally indoctrinate every newly arriving trooper thus:

1. Never establish a pattern. Continuously frustrate the enemy's expectations.
2. Never be unarmed. When necessary, carry concealed, but always have a gun and a blade on you.
3. Never give up. Never give in.
4. Nice guys are a dime a dozen. Daring, decisive, and caring leaders are priceless.
5. Know the locals. Know your beat.
6. Know when to act contrary to orders.

THE BEST MEDAL IS A SMILE ON THE FACE OF A LIVE COMRADE."

*Comment: It can't be said too often: Leaders who genuinely care about their men are followed anywhere, without question and without hesitation. And, they make history! Soldiers not cared about, and supervised by the fearful and detached, invariably function like a disorganized hoard of tourists.*

## Some Comments From The Philippines On Cops Carrying:

"Some time ago, Communist hit squads were plying the city with specific orders to take out men in uniform and steal their carry pistols in order to arm other insurgents. Despite this threat, many cops limited their security measures to merely dressing in civilian clothes after their shift ended. Many were shot to death at the gates of their own homes, simply because they did not foresee where they were most predictable and lax."

*Lesson: Don't ever delude yourself into thinking you're too insignificant to be a target. In today's world, even children are targets!*

## A Case In Point:

"Last Tuesday (14 Sept 04), 46 Brazilian policemen, traveling via bus to a sports competition, were stopped and fleeced at gunpoint by four, armed robbers. The bus carrying the ALL UNARMED police officers was headed to the city of Salvador in Bahia when two cars carrying the robbery suspects forced it to stop on the main highway. Robbers took cameras, cellular phones, and wallets. Officers are lucky to be alive.

When boarding the bus, the police officers were told that there was no need for them to have guns, as this was not a job-related event. Apparently, someone forgot to tell the robbers!

*John Farnam is an independent firearms instructor and a frequent contributor to SOF. ☒*



# "Picture Two People, Locked In Mortal Combat, One Strangling The Other. Now, Imagine Yourself In This Scene And Tell Me... What Would You Do?"

(Hint: Whatever Your Answer, The Odds Are... It's Wrong!"



**K**ick him in the groin." "Strike the arms or punch the solar plexus." "Grab the hands." "Stomp on his instep"

The list is always the same.

Unfortunately... each answer puts your life at risk in the face of a life-or-death assault.

Why? Because invariably when Tim Larkin asks students this question at his *Target-Focus™ Training* (TFT) bootcamps...

## No One — Not Even Trained Martial Artists — Sees Themselves As The One Doing The Choking!!

They're always the one being choked.

But think about it... couldn't this have been the scenario?

*You are surprised by two attackers. You've completely disabled the first and now have control of the second and are about to put him totally out of commission...*

Possible? Of course. It's just that no one sees it this way. It's human nature. We shy from victory, from domination. It's the way most of us are built... unless you're a criminal...

**Here's the problem:** A thug comes up, places a knife to your throat and demands your wallet. Taking him at his word you give him the wallet. He then proceeds to stab you repeatedly leaving you in a pool of your own blood, astonished you've been stabbed.

What went wrong? Just this. You ASSUMED he only wanted the wallet. After all, why would anyone stab someone over a few measly bucks? **YOU** certainly wouldn't do that if you were robbing someone.

And that **IS** the problem. With thinking like that...

## You've Just Transferred Your Own Moral Code To A Sociopathic Killer... And With It, Quite Possibly, Your Life.

See, nothing bothers him. Certainly not your morals. With a total disregard for society and it's rules, he has no regret whatsoever in cramming a blade into your gut... to get what he wants.

You stroll around thinking 15 years of martial arts training or that 6-week self-defense course or some reality fighting video gives you the edge you need against someone like this. Wake up!

**You are hopelessly training techniques** (then praying they work) against someone who isn't "training" for you. How many criminals in federal pens spent years sweating through JKD workouts before committing their crime? How many are Jujitsu experts?

**Not a one!** They excel at just one thing: doin' it. No training, no practice, no techniques. And certainly no "rules". So why squander years fooling yourself with something that only works "if everyone plays by the rules"?

**These are the facts:** 98% of us caught in an unavoidable violent attack (even those with years of training), would never consider doing "whatever it takes" to survive — like gouging our attacker's eyes — even if they were the only targets available, and... even if it was the only means of saving our own life!

Larkin trains you from the get-go how to kill, if necessary, to survive a life-or-death confrontation.

He doesn't advocate violence. TFT just demystifies it. He's often quoted...

## "Violence Is Rarely The Answer. But When It Is... It's The Only Answer."

Look... others in Soldier of Fortune try to impress



Tim Larkin, creator of Target-Focus Training

you with how bad they are; their accomplishments in the "secret world" you aren't privy to; their guru status.

TFT isn't about that. It's not about an individual, a personality... or a guru.

It's about a system... one that's focused totally on you!

**No bones about it:** Larkin's record is impressive. He trains units from all the top echelons of federal law enforcement and military special operations groups. It's

not surprising since he comes from that world and is well known there. But everyone in Soldier of Fortune tries to claim this so you'll rarely hear him talk about it.

He's an awesome communicator and trainer, and is amazingly approachable for someone with his abilities and credentials. And he's trained 1,000's of CEOs and others in high-risk positions around the world — all very real people.

But why is this so important? Why is TFT being sought out in all these other arenas?

**Because it works!** Because you "get it" immediately. Not after weeks or months or even years of training... but **right now**... as soon as you experience it. And...

## Not Only Is It Usable... Instantly... But Just Like Riding A Bicycle It Stays With You Forever... Even If You Never Practice It Again!

**Here's why:** the key lies in the fact this is the only system based totally on the PRINCIPLES (not techniques) that determine the outcome of any physical confrontation. Combine these with three supporting methodologies that form the foundation of every fighting system on the planet and you have a complete system usable by ANYone for handling ANY violent confrontation. With this information you can look at anything out there... including your own training... and know immediately if it's worth keeping.

*"It was the most effective days of training in hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon that I or everyone else had ever experienced."* Brian (last name withheld), US Border Patrol, S Carolina

Last year Larkin trained over 600 CEO's in Europe. This year he'll spend 17 consecutive days training others in England, the Far East and Asia, and India. These folks are eating his stuff up because TFT principles and methodology are as effective in the "combative" world of business as they are in a truly lethal fight, and for the exact same reason... **RESULTS.**

**Think about this:** if these people can get this much from his material, imagine how much more you can learn... a dedicated reader of Soldier of Fortune magazine who is really into finding and applying a system that is quickly learned and deadly effective. If all these folks are seeking him out, shouldn't you be too?

Look, Larkin is swamped and realizes he can't begin to reach everyone. While he'd love to have you as a member of his organization and to take part in his live training, he realistically understands few will be able to do this. Bootcamps run \$1,500.00, international events start at \$9,500.00, and personal training for small 2- to 4-person sessions is \$10,000.00 and more.

That's why, in a daring move with potentially serious ramifications, he's released a new WEAPONS-focused

version of his TFT system that shows you how to defeat a violent criminal in a **WORSE-than-worst-case scenario**. After seeing his program... a life-or-death confrontation in a dark alley is a piece of cake.

Not only does this new series take you inside the criminal mind, it goes way beyond... showing you how and why you must first learn to USE a weapon... if you ever hope to defeat a criminal using it against you! Highly unconventional and extremely controversial it teaches you how to get your focus off the weapon... and onto defeating the REAL threat.

Some foolishly feel this stuff is too violent, totally ignorant of the fact you don't always have to push it to the levels shown on these tapes.

## It's Very Easy To Ramp This Down To Fit A Lesser Situation But It's Impossible To Ramp Up And Kill Someone If You've Never Trained For It!

Some will be shocked, dismayed, offended and outraged that anyone would dare show this stuff. They'll raise a stink... and do everything possible to get this yanked. But better you see this on video than experience it first-hand on the street!

Everything you'll see here is vintage TFT. You learn to hurt someone very quickly (every sequence shows killing movements right from the start). There's no size, speed or quickness required. Anyone can learn this because it's based on principles not some guru's skills.

Guys that have been in the trenches for years are blown away by the simple brutality and effectiveness of this system and the competence of Larkin's instructors, including their knowledge of anatomy and how to inflict trauma on the human body.

Each averages 10 years of training and surprisingly most aren't "jocks". Many have advanced degrees; five hold PhD's! His advisory board includes two medical doctors who assure everything you see about inflicting trauma on the human body is totally accurate.

*"With this system: 1) You will learn what Larkin says you will learn, and 2) The course is exactly as advertised — intense, targeted, focused training designed to produce immediate results."* Mark D. Fabiani, Crisis Mgt Consultant, La Jolla, CA

Let's cut to the chase: this program is extremely controversial and NOT for everyone. If you'd never consider killing someone threatening your life or if you're hoping to see lots of useless predetermined techniques or cool setup moves — you can stop reading here. This is only for those who want to learn to defeat a criminal in a life-or-death situation.

Listen. I understand you may find this hard to believe. That's how I felt too until I saw the videos. Unfortunately there's not room here to adequately describe the shocking reality of what Larkin has created for you. That's why he's not asking for a penny of your money now. Instead he'll spend his own cash to put a 17-page Special Report into your hands that will prove everything you've just read and explain why this program is so DIFFERENT from anything you've seen before.

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# Al-Qaeda

PART 2

## Zimbabwe Nexus

*R.W. Johnson Ponders the Existence of a Political Triad Linking Osama bin Laden and Muammar Qaddafi via Robert Mugabe.*

COURTESY FOCUS 34, THE HELEN SUZMAN FOUNDATION

*Last month, the author examined connections between Mugabe, Qaddafi and Osama bin Laden, and frequent contacts between Bin Laden's infamous Egyptian deputy Zawahiri and Mugabe, in Zimbabwe. This month we examine the mechanics of the Libyan, Zimbabwean, al-Qaeda and Taliban connection and the tangible support for international terrorism.*

**M**ention of remote farms tied in with the fact that the growing Libyan team in Zimbabwe had acquired a number of farms in the Zanu-PF heartland of Mashonaland Central. As more Libyans arrived they moved straight to these farms — so any Arab moving onto these farms would simply be assumed to be a Libyan by any Zimbabwean. So could these farms be used for al-Qaeda purposes too? My CIO contacts had also wondered if these farms were being used for al-Qaeda purposes and had told me that when Qaddafi had passed through Harare en route to the African Union meeting in Durban he had exhorted local Muslim Asians to greater militancy and had even threatened to have Pagad strong-arm men sent up from Cape Town — with whom, it seems, he was already in touch — to knock them into line if necessary. They also reminded me that almost on the eve of 9/11 Mugabe had been Qaddafi's guest in Tripoli for the 32nd anniversary of Libya's "national revolution". In the end I managed to track down the relevant issue of Mugabe's mouthpiece, *The Herald*.

Saturday, 1 September 2001 had found Mugabe in Tripoli where Qaddafi called on his assembled African allies "to support the hero, president Mugabe, since Zimbabwe is a strategic country". But Qaddafi seems to have remained close enough to al-Qaeda to have a pretty good idea that a major

blow was about to be struck against the Americans - this was just ten days before 9/11 — for he openly boasted of Bin Laden's prowess and mocked the US for failing to catch him

after the bombing of the US embassies in East Africa:

"We no longer wage war with the old weapons. Now they can fight you with electrons and viruses. The crazy world powers that have invested huge amounts of money in weapons of mass destruction have found themselves unable to fight the new strain of rebellion. As a simple example, the USA is unable to fight someone called Osama Bin Laden. He is a tiny man, weighing no more than 50 kg. He has only a Kalashnikov rifle in his hands. He doesn't even wear a military uniform. He wears a jalabiyah (Arab robe) and turban and lives in a cavern, eating stale bread. He has driven the USA crazy, more than the former Soviet Union did. Can you imagine that?" This passage — quoted approvingly in *The Herald* — suggests that Qaddafi had been in recent contact with Bin Laden, was aware of his living conditions in the caves of Afghanistan and also knew that some fiendish new strike, employing unconventional weapons, was about to hit the USA. It seems quite possible that Qaddafi imparted what he knew to Mugabe for he must have realized that any such strike would have major implications for anyone who had been lending assistance to the likes of Zawahiri.

When the September 11 strike took place Qaddafi quickly distanced himself from it as publicly as he could, clearly fearing US reprisals. Mugabe himself said nothing — but within the CIO in Harare there was panic. "Those of us who knew about the contacts with Zawahiri were scared stiff," Walter had told me. "We thought this might be the end of everything. We had visions of B-52s over Harare."

The printing of Qaddafi's 1 September 2001 speech in *The Herald* had caught the eye of several MDC members. "When September 11 occurred I went back and looked at it again," one of them told me. "Then we noticed an Afghan we call Mr. Moosa." Moosa, who was in the motor trade, had got into a trifling dispute with a florist near his premises over



parking spaces. Amazingly, the CIO immediately materialized and warned off the florist: Mr Moosa was, they said, a very important person and under the government's protection. The same happened when some of Moosa's workers threatened a strike. Again the CIO arrived in force to warn the workers that they had better not dream of upsetting a person enjoying president Mugabe's protection. "We managed to get through to a person in the ministry of foreign affairs," my MDC contact told me. "He confirmed that Moosa was a special case and that 'we're looking after him'. For us that was virtual confirmation that he was effectively the Afghan — and thus, at that time, the Taliban-ambas-

sador, perhaps even the al-Qaeda ambassador. He clearly has a hot-line to Mugabe which in turn means they have an on-going deal." They then discovered that Moosa's office did no actual business."It was just a front company, providing a phone, fax, e-mail, a bank account and it took delivery of containers. There couldn't be an open Taliban embassy here, so they had this disguised one instead."

One of the MDC activists deputized to watch Moosa was 'Richard', who works out every morning in a Harare gym. In early September 2001 Richard noticed that Moosa and two Afghan companions had begun to frequent the same gym. On 12 September 2001, the day after the attack on the twin towers, he walked across the gym to where Moosa's party were exercising and asked them what they thought of the previous day's events. "They were vehemently anti-American and clearly pro-Taliban," Richard told me. "They said the Americans had got exactly what they deserved. They seemed to be bursting with a mixture of elation and bitterness. To be

frank I think they blurted out more than they meant to because they disappeared from the gym for a few days after that.

"Then in the week following they reappeared, this time with eight other Afghans. These guys looked tired, as if they'd been travelling, which I guess they had," Richard reported. "One of them



**LIBYA**

U.S. DoJ



**Ayman Al-Zawahiri, aka "The Doctor,"** believed to be the personal physician of Osama bin Laden, has a \$25 million price on his head for his alleged role in the U.S. Embassy bombings in West Africa. Twice a guest of Mugabe, at the behest of Libyan terrorist sponsor Muammar Qaddafi.



**ZIMBABWE**



was wearing a Tamil Tiger T-shirt. My immediate guess was that these were escaping Taliban or al-Qaeda. I've had military training myself and these men were fighters. If you're a fighter you've got to stay fit, even if you're stressed and traveling. That's why I think they were at the gym. They only came that once and then disappeared."

At this I went back to another CIO source who put out feelers among his former colleagues in the CIO. One of them, he confirmed to me a few days later, had told him that in mid-September he had been asked to produce ten false passports for the same number of Libyans. These were delivered on 20 September. When I queried whether the recipients were genuinely Libyans it became clear that all that was really known was that they had previously been travelling on Libyan passports. The tie-up between these ten passports and the eleven men seen by Richard at the gym hardly needs emphasis, particularly since Richard must have seen them in the week of 12 to 19 September — as they waited for their new passports, with which they could then leave Zimbabwe with fresh identities.

One also has to remember that Zimbabwean military involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo had given Mugabe and the top Zanu-PF elite control over several diamond mines there, including a joint venture with Al



U.S. DoJ

*Born in the Comoros Islands, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed (aka Haroun Fazil) masterminded the Nairobi bombings, and was another who emerged from the al-Qaeda network active in Southern Africa for many years earlier — and which had many points of contact within the ruling Zimbabwean elite. He traveled to Nairobi to set up the evil deed — surprise, surprise — on a Zimbabwean passport.*

Shanfari's Oryx Group in the Senga Senga mine. According to a confidential study prepared by Kroll Associates in 2002, "Al Shanfari and Oryx launder diamonds for several Lebanese traders linked to al-Qaeda". Thus here too there was a direct — and profitable — relationship between Mugabe and al-Qaeda, providing, incidentally, a route through which payment for other services could also be made. In fact al-Qaeda involvement with blood diamonds goes back some way before 9/11. Two al-Qaeda operatives named by the Washington Post (3 November 2001) as having been involved in the DRC since the mid-1990s are Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani and Fazul Abdullah Mohammed. Ghailani, a Tanzanian, was also the man who bought the truck used in the truck-bombing of the US embassy in Dar-Es-Salaam in 1998 while Fazul turns out to be one of the many aliases used by Haroun Fazil, the mastermind behind the Nairobi embassy bombing. Thus both the key architects of the East African embassy bombings emerged from an al-Qaeda network active in southern Africa for some years before that, one which will have had many points

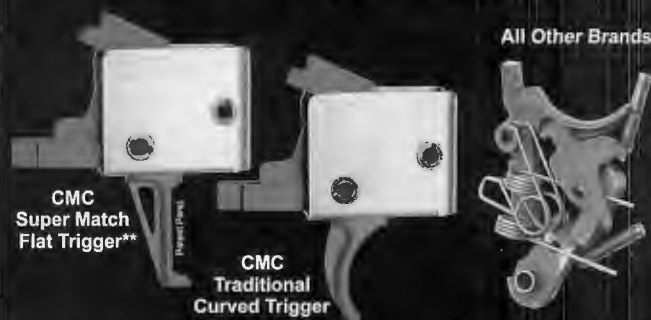
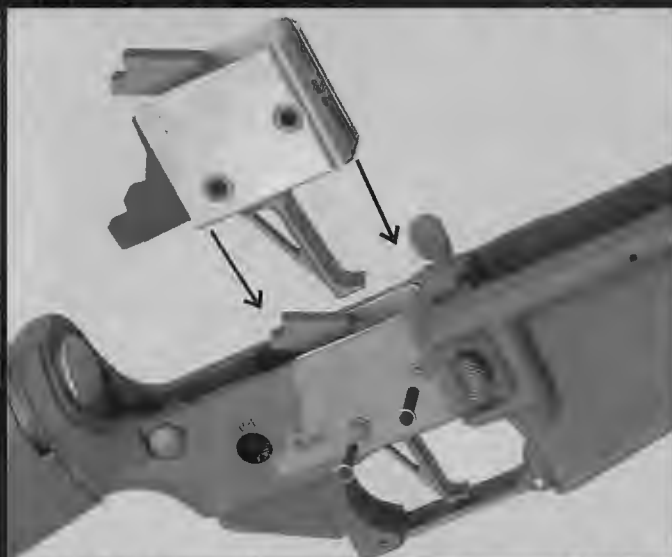
of contact with the ruling Zimbabwean elite. This throws a new light on Zawahiri's alleged visits to

Zimbabwe prior to 9/11 — he was clearly travelling to an area in which he already had operatives and at least a rudi-

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mentary infrastructure. This would certainly have increased the likelihood that al-Qaeda would have wanted to use Zimbabwe for the transit-and-laundering role we have seen.

Another straw in the wind was the revelation that closed circuit TV cameras within the Planet Hollywood restaurant in Cape Town had recorded the image of a known al-Qaeda suspect lolling against the restaurant's bar a month before the bomb-blast there. The police, who identified the man as a Moroccan based in Zimbabwe, strangely refused to act on this information. It is tempting to link this attitude with Pretoria's rapid volte face on the issue of 9/11. By January 2002 ANC pressure on ex-president Mandela had forced him publicly to recant his previous condemnation of Bin Laden, while deputy president Zuma announced that the ANC no longer saw 9/11 as a terrorist act but as a blow in a wider struggle against imperialism. He simultaneously denounced Britain and

America for their war on the Taliban which, he said, was aimed "against innocent Afghan civilians". Given president Mbeki's support for president Mugabe it is possible that Pretoria was not keen to see a line of enquiry opened up in the Planet Hollywood affair which led back to the presence of al-Qaeda activists in Zimbabwe.



courtesy South African Government

*The connection to international terrorism via Col. Qaddafi might prove to be an embarrassment to Mugabe's few supporters, such as South Africa President Thabo Mbeki, a former communist and Moscow-trained guerrilla fighter who now embraces a free-market economy as the best tool for financial development in his home country.*

The real question is whether South Africa's NIA has taken note of what is happening and whether president Mbeki, in the strong support he has lent Mugabe, has realized the full implications of what he is doing. ☒

In Harare again in late 2003 I was struck by the US embassy posters offering a \$2 million reward for Haroun Fazil. Quite clearly, the FBI believe either that he may be in Zimbabwe or that there may be people there who know him. I decided that this merited a visit to Zimbabwean CID headquarters in the vast police camp adjacent to Mugabe's presidential palace. I eventually found the office I was looking for, with a Wanted poster of Fazil from Interpol — and a CID poster showing a copy of Fazil's passport. For, it emerges, Fazil travelled to Nairobi to carry out the bombings which were to kill and maim thousands from Harare, on a Zimbabwean passport.

The possibility that Zimbabwe may have provided some sort of support base for both the East African and 9/11 atrocities — perhaps even for the Planet Hollywood bombing too — is perhaps not surprising. Mugabe has, after all, not scrupled to use terror against his own people.

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# DOWN AND DIRTY AT AD DIWANIYAH

## Capt. Brian R. Chontosh, USMC, receives Navy Cross

BY CPL. LUIS R. AGOSTINI, USMC

Marine Capt. Brian R. Chontosh received the Navy Cross Medal from the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, Gen. Michael W. Hagee, during an awards ceremony at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Training Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Three other Marines received medals for valor at the same ceremony. Chontosh, 29, from Rochester, N.Y., received the naval service's second highest award for extraordinary heroism while serving as Combined Anti-Armor Platoon Commander, Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 25 March 2003. The Medal of Honor is the highest military award.

While leading his platoon north on Highway 1 toward Ad Diwaniyah, Chontosh's platoon moved into a coordinated ambush of mortars, rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapons fire. With coalition tanks blocking the road ahead, he realized his platoon was caught in a kill zone.

He had his driver move the vehicle through a breach along his flank, where he was immediately taken under fire from an entrenched machine gun. Without hesitation, Chontosh ordered the driver to advanced directly at the enemy position, enabling his .50 caliber machine gunner to silence the enemy.

He then directed his driver into the enemy trench, where he exited his vehicle and began to clear the trench with an M16A2 service rifle and 9 millimeter pistol. His ammunition depleted, Chontosh, with complete disregard for his safety, twice picked up discarded enemy rifles and continued his ferocious attack.

When a Marine following him found an enemy rocket propelled grenade launcher, Chontosh used it to destroy yet another group of enemy soldiers.

When his audacious attack ended, he had cleared more

than 200 meters of the enemy trench, killing more than 20 enemy soldiers and wounding several others.

"They are the reflection of the Marine Corps type who's service to the Marine Corps and country is held above their own safety and lives," said Gen. Hagee, commenting on the four Marines who received medals during the ceremony. "I'm proud to be here awarding the second highest and third highest awards for bravery to these great Marines."

"These four Marines are a reflection of every Marine and sailor in this great battalion," said Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada.

"I was just doing my job, I did the same thing every other Marine would have done, it was just a passion and love for my Marines, the experience put a lot into perspective," said Chontosh.

In effect since April 1917, and established by an Act of Congress on 4 February 1919, the Navy Cross may be awarded to any person who, while serving with the Navy or Marine Corps, distinguishes himself/herself in action by extraordinary heroism not justifying an award of the Medal of Honor.

The action must take place under one of three circumstances: while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or, while serving with friendly foreign forces

engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

To earn a Navy Cross the act to be commended must be performed in the presence of great danger or at great personal risk and must be performed in such a manner as to render the individual highly conspicuous among others of equal grade, rate, experience, or position of responsibility.

More than 6,000 Navy Crosses have been awarded since World War I. ✕



Cpl. Jeremy Vought, USMC



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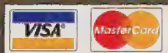
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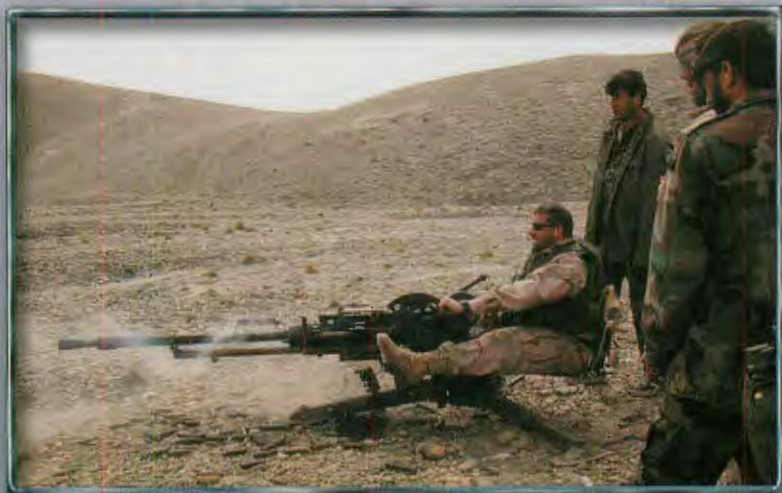
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# THE WINNERS ARE IN!

## 11TH PRIZE OVERALL



**"Jalalibad Joyride"**  
by SSG Gregory Tarancon

[ODA 2025, Co B, 1st SF Bn, 20th SFG]



Gregory wins a set of Blackhawk  
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## 12TH PRIZE OVERALL



**"Rubber Duck Navy"**  
by PH-1 Aaron Ansarov, USN



Aaron wins an Ontario TAK Battle Blade



# FREEDOM PHOTO CONTEST

For the next few issues, *SOF* will take pride in publishing the winning entries of the Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom Photo Contest. We would like sincerely to thank the sponsors of this contest, who have demonstrated their generous and patriotic support for our men and women in uniform and in

harm's way, by donating prizes of "the right stuff" as a tangible example of our national appreciation. This good-as-it-gets gear is a suitable "Thank You" to our troops who have given the very best of themselves. Prizes awarded will be showcased with winning entries, as a "thank you" to our generous sponsors.

## 13TH PRIZE OVERALL

### "Prepping An Nueymenyah, Iraq" by CAPT. R.H. McLaughlin USMC

TOW 2A at Al Hadeffa, Iraq



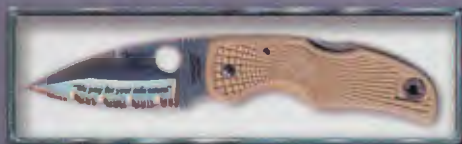
R. H. wins a Ruger Custom Pistol  
Presentation Box and a  
Spyderco Combat Folder



## 14TH PRIZE OVERALL

### "Policing Up The Spoils"

by SFC  
Kevin A. Oakes



Kevin wins a Spyderco Combat Folder  
and custom sharpening stones





BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

## AMERICA AT WAR

**WORLDWIDE TERRORISM** threatens individual rights. Russian President Putin has installed emergency measures after children slaughtered in Beslan, endangering democracy by concentrating power in the Kremlin. Putin wants law to end direct election of governors and lower house (Duma) in 89 regions. Ultra-liberal NETHERLANDS clamps down on the teaching of radical Islam. FRANCE, reacting to kidnap of two French Journalists in Iraq and threats from radicals, restricts fundamentalist dress in schools. BUDDHIST NEPALESE workers murdered in Iraq results in ban on Nepalese going to Iraq, depriving many poor of their livelihood. PAPAL THREATS restrict Pope's personal freedom. PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT pulls out of Iraq in response to terrorist threats and orders citizens out, resulting in many poor losing their jobs abroad. The UNITED STATES Patriot Act has many worried as to how the government will define and mark one as a "terrorist." Military tribunals that collapsed all constitutional rights establish a scary precedent for U.S. citizens.

**1. INDONESIA EMBASSY BOMBING:** terrorist who blew up Australian Embassy, killing 191 natives, is arrested. AUSTRALIAN POLICE joined investigation that led to arrest of Azahari Husin, bomb maker for Jemaah Islamiyah, who knew whereabouts of explosives being prepared to bomb more sites. RUSSIAN TERRORISM LAISON office to open.

**2. COLOMBIA TERRORIST GROUPS (FARC, ELN AND AUC)** have suffered more than 1,500 deaths and 5,782 arrested this year, due to increased military spending and troop expansion from 280,000 to 360,000.



**3. RUSSIA** TERRORISM IN WAVES: POLICE BRIBE (\$35 dollars) and Police incompetence allow Chechen female suicide terrorists to pass through airport security. Two suicide-terrorists took out one plane each, killing 88 passengers. Russia's 9-11, largest hostage-taking terrorist attack in Beslan school, kills 350, wounds 700. More than 1000 hostages seized by 30 operators.

**4. THE HAGUE** MOCKING THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, Milosevic's courtroom antics are up. Judges, fed up with his stall tactics and self-defense, have appointed two new defense lawyers. BEL-LIGERANT TYRANT refuses to cooperate with defense counsel.

**NETHERLANDS** TERRORIST ATTACKS thwarted by arrest of five suspects. Targets included the only nuclear plant, Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, the Parliament and Defense Ministry. Country used as base by Saudis, Yemenis, Moroccans and other operatives.

**5. BOSNIA** ITALIAN PEACEKEEPERS working in the crime-rampant country find group of 10 terrorists planning to kill the Pope in Rome.

**9. IRAQ** BEHEADING OF THREE KURDS and two Americans shown on videotapes, raising fears of uprising of Kurds in Northern Iraq, leading to bloody civil war. More than 100 foreigners have been kidnapped, many executed.

**10. AFGHANISTAN** 20 MILLION pro-bin Laden Pushtuns adopt bin Laden as folk hero. Tribes and criminal gangs are thought to harbor bin Laden and his all-Qaeda buddies. (*Strategyworld*)

**11. PAKISTAN** PAKI ARMY claims it cleared foreign fighters from the Pushtun Eastern border areas (Waziristan). More than 70 foreigners, a dozen Paki soldiers, and civilians killed. Several hundred foreign mercenaries still operate.

**12. TURKEY** RINGLEADER of militant Islamic cell that bombed synagogues, British consulate and bank in Istanbul, killing 61, boasts that he is a "Qaeda warrior" and warned of more attacks.

**6. ITALY** PEOPLE-SMUGGLING HUB that sneaks 300,000 illegals from Albania and North Africa is predicted to become avenue for al-Qaeda operatives to sneak into Europe.

**7. ISRAEL** ARMY DESERTION problem—3-4% or 10,000 last year. Some desert in protest of combat operations in the Palestinian territories, most desert because of economic or lifestyle reasons. HAMAS, smashed in West Bank, shifts operations to Gaza. Al Aqsa Brigades are targeted next.

**8. YEMEN** Army fights several thousand Islamic pro al-Qaeda radicals.

**13. SUDAN** GENOCIDE by government on the people, declares U.S. Arab Janjaweed Militia, armed by officials, kills 50,000 villagers.



# HIGH SPEED, LOW DRAG

## Super-Fast Catamarans Take the Fight to the Enemy

BY JOHN HIGGS

### Canoes, Car Ferries, And Combat Ships

The ancient Polynesians discovered that they could build faster boats if they designed them to have not one hull, but two long, thin, hulls of shallow draft, mounted side by side, that actually sliced *through* waves rather than riding over them. Centuries later, this wave-piercing Catamaran design was rediscovered by companies like Incat Tasmania PTY, Ltd. to build catamarans that can travel through shallow water at high speed while carrying heavy cargo loads for commercial uses such as car ferries. This concept has not been lost on the U.S. Navy and Army, who, in July 2001, began a collaboration called JOINT VENTURE to lease a modified car ferry design from Australian shipbuilders. The Navy's interest lay in support of countermine warfare, special-operations support and anti-submarine operations, while the Army was looking for a high-speed logistics-support platform.

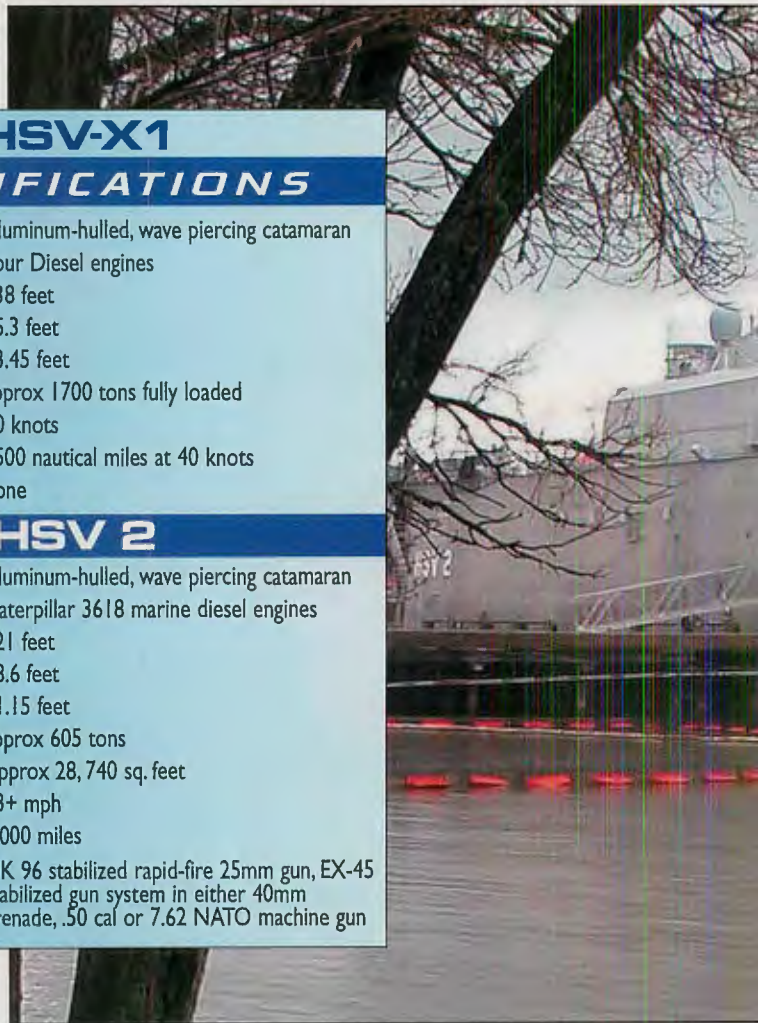
### High Speed Vessel — Joint Venture HSV-X1

Based upon a proven commercial car ferry design using Commercial Off the Shelf Technology (COTS), Incat, in a strategic alliance with U.S. ship-builder Bollinger Shipyard, Inc., of Louisiana, built and leased a High Speed Craft (HSC) jointly to the Navy and Army for use as an evaluation platform for various requirements of both services. The aluminum-hulled *Joint Venture HSV-X1* is capable of carrying 800 tons of military vehicles and 360 people at speeds up to 50 Knots / 57mph (a Knot is one nautical mile per hour; a nautical mile is 6,080 feet). In 2002, under a Navy crew, *Joint Venture* participated in Exercise Battle Griffin-02 in Norway in freezing conditions. In this exercise in expeditionary warfare maneuver, she

was used to move equipment along the Norwegian coast, culminating in an amphibious raid where she off-loaded 26 Marine Corps Light Armored Vehicles (LAV-25) and six Humvees, in 10 minutes, via her stern ramp.

She also placed large numbers of mines on precise coordinates, and ably demonstrated her high-speed maneuver capability in the confines of the Norwegian fjords in bad weather. An Army crew sailed her across the Mediterranean,

HSV-X1	
SPECIFICATIONS	
<b>Ship type:</b>	Aluminum-hulled, wave piercing catamaran
<b>Propulsion system:</b>	Four Diesel engines
<b>Length:</b>	338 feet
<b>Beam:</b>	85.3 feet
<b>Draft:</b>	13.45 feet
<b>Displacement:</b>	approx 1700 tons fully loaded
<b>Speed:</b>	50 knots
<b>Range:</b>	1500 nautical miles at 40 knots
<b>Armament:</b>	none
HSV 2	
<b>Ship type:</b>	Aluminum-hulled, wave piercing catamaran
<b>Propulsion:</b>	Caterpillar 3618 marine diesel engines
<b>Length:</b>	321 feet
<b>Beam:</b>	88.6 feet
<b>Draft:</b>	11.15 feet
<b>Payload capacity:</b>	approx 605 tons
<b>Cargo deck:</b>	Approx 28,740 sq. feet
<b>Maximum speed:</b>	53+ mph
<b>Range:</b>	4,000 miles
<b>Armament:</b>	MK 96 stabilized rapid-fire 25mm gun, EX-45 stabilized gun system in either 40mm grenade, .50 cal or 7.62 NATO machine gun





through the Suez Canal, and sped into the shallow waters of the Persian Gulf during the opening hours of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where she acted as a floating forward staging base near the southern Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. From *Joint Venture*, Navy SEAL teams and Marine Anti-Terrorism Units assaulted and took control of two significant oil terminals just outside the port. "For the first few hours of the war, we were the most forward ship in the U.S. Navy," said Navy Captain Phil Beierl, the *Marine Corps Times* reported.

#### High Speed Vessel — Spearhead TSV-1X

In November 2002, the U.S. Army took delivery from Bollinger/Incat USA of its first Theater Support Vessel (TSV), named *Spearhead*. This is part of the Advanced Concept Technology Demonstrator (ACTD) program that identifies military requirements and then satisfies them from COTS technology. The acquisition of *Spearhead* as a high-speed troop carrier is an integral part of the U.S. Army's Transformation goal — as defined in 1999 by [then] Army Chief of Staff (CSA) General Eric K. Shinseki, to be able to deploy combat forces in Brigade Combat Teams anywhere in the world within 96 hours. Also based upon a car ferry design, *Spearhead TSV-1X* is an ideal platform to transport armored vehicles as large as the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank to almost any coastal location in the world.

She is crewed by the 469th Transportation Detachment, Fort Eustis, Va., who used it in Operation Iraqi Freedom to transport two Patriot missile battalions from Qatar to the

Kuwaiti Naval Base, and to move the 101st Airborne Military Police from Djibouti to Kuwait; That's 2000 miles in about 60 hours. "Operationally, the boat the Army ultimately wants will be bigger. The goal is to carry two Stryker units. This one (the *Spearhead*) carries only one." Chief Warrant 2 Bill Slusher, the TSV navigation officer, recently stated in an interview with *Defend America*, the Defense Department's news journal. [Author's note: The Stryker is the Army's controversial eight-wheeled Light Armored Vehicle, acquired as a replacement troop carrier for the tracked M113 APC "Gavin".]

#### High Speed Vessel — Swift HSV 2

The U.S. Navy received its second High Speed Vessel catamaran — the HSV 2 *Swift* on 15 August 2003, only 10 months from when the contract was awarded to Bollinger/Incat USA. Building on the lessons learned from the HSV-X1 and TSV-1X programs, more than 75 enhancements were incorporated into the *Swift*. Requirements included use of COTS equipment, and building the vessel to commercial standards for modular payloads. This approach allowed the crew to be trained according to commercial high-speed vessel training courses and facilitated departure on her maiden voyage only 11 days after delivery. Incidentally, *Swift* has two 40-person crews, designated Blue and Gold, to maximize the vessel's operational availability. One crew is stationed at Naval Station Ingleside, Texas, the other at Naval

*Continued on page 80*



Sgt. 1st Class Doug Samele / via www.defenselink.mil



*Russian troopers evacuate casualties. Providing cover (central figure) is an MVD (Ministry of Interior) spetsnaz trooper in a protective helmet and wearing the distinctive "flora" camouflage pattern of his unit. He is armed with a 9mm VSS silenced carbine with an integral laser sight. The trooper next to him is armed with a 5.45mm AK-74M with a 40mm BG-15 under-barrel grenade launcher.*



KABU, TUTOV/APF/Getty Images



BY LARRY PRATT

Even before the victims were buried, the politically correct “Monday-morning quarterbacking” had begun. Why had efforts failed to stop the butchery of children and adults in a school in Beslan, Russia?

Some European leaders wondered why there had not been negotiations, suggesting that the carnage was the fault of the Russian government whose troops stormed the school and rescued hundreds of hostages!

Blame the victim. This is the disarmament logic that has hobbled national and self defense for most of the last century. Don't resort to violence when threatened by a thug ... that will only provoke an escalation of violence, we are told.

## A Lesson From Beslan School Massacre

The Russian government should be blamed, but not for the way it handled the crisis, once it unfolded. Blame is deserved for the immoral policy of civilian disarmament that left a school unprotected. No principals, counselors, teachers, janitors — nobody was armed except the bad guys.

And the shooting-fish-in-a-barrel scenario in Russia could just as easily happen in the United States because we have the same anti-self defense policy in our schools.

The zero-tolerance mantra of the anti-self defense crowd would rather have us suspend a boy or girl for forming the likeness of a gun with their fingers than having certified armed personnel on site. America's porous borders have given ample opportunity for Islamist fascists to enter, form and launch a Beslan-type attack right here in the United States. Groups of illegal Arab immigrants have been apprehended inside our Arizona border.

A Muslim terrorist, Shamil Besayev, directed the Russian attack. Besayev is credited with the Moscow Theater and other acts of murder in Russia.

Shamil Besayev is a Chechin terrorist who is part of the Wahhabi sect of Islam — the same that spawned Osama bin Ladden.

The only way to stop terrorists like Besayev and his thuggish followers is to kill them. Negotiations are impossible with those who come to kill, not to talk; and appeasement only encourages worse attacks.

Surrender-at-any price advocates object that if teachers and other school personnel open up on invading jihadists, innocent people — even kids — might be killed. What can one say to such an argument in the face of 350 defenseless victims?

Oh, we should rely on SWAT teams, some will argue. First of all, the Islamist fascists kill on the way in. Talking is for bedwetters. They must suffer return fire immediately. And, what if more than one school is attacked simultaneously in one city? How many SWAT teams are there?

While these murderous thugs are willing to die, they want to do so on their own terms. It is up to armed defenders to kill them in the first moments of an attack and spoil their bloody plans.

The U.S. needs to change its deadly gun bans in the nation's schools.

Otherwise, when a group of Islamist fascists attacks a school in the United States, we will join the Russians in mourning the needless deaths of defenseless schoolyard victims.

In 1975, Islamist butchers slaughtered students in an Israeli school.

After that, their schools have been protected not only by guards, but by armed adults (staff and even parents) as well. By the grace of God, no further attacks have occurred.

Congress needs to act decisively to enhance America's homeland security. Congress must pass legislation to enable schools to provide certified armed personnel. Our congressmen need to hear from us before it is too late.

Larry Pratt is Executive Director of Gun Owners of America located at 8001 Forbes Place, Springfield, VA 22151; 703-321-8585. Pratt can also be contacted at [ldpratt@gunowners.org](mailto:ldpratt@gunowners.org). ☒





MIAMI'S MAD MAX

# Marines

PART 5

**"IF WE STOP,  
WE'RE DEAD!"**

## *The Route Behind Was Not Secure; The Route Ahead Was Crawling With Enemy*

BY DONALD SCHUTT

PHOTOS BY SERGEANT MICHAEL A. LOZANO  
& THE MARINES OF TOW/SCOUT MIAMI

*Last month Iraqis tried to ambush the Miami Marines, the lead unit of the Marines' advance on Baghdad, with a phony surrender. It was a deceitful, daring, and ultimately suicidal tactic.*

Back up in the front of the Battalion's column the tanks of Alpha Company had reached the leading Scouts in Tiger Section. Tanks were intermixed with HUMMVs. The tanks of Alpha Company had purposely parked adjacent to Tiger Scouts in order to protect their more vulnerable comrades with their heavy armor.

The Battalion Commander came on the radio and explained that the Battalion had reached its "limit of advance". Lieutenant Colonel Oehl, further back in the column, was not fully aware of the intensity of the action at the front. Lieutenant Zummo was not on the radio-net feeding back information. He had been deafened by the RPG blast and Sergeant Michael was manning the radio.

Sergeant Michael listened to the Battalion Commander on the radio. With his wounded and bleeding Lieutenant still manning his vehicle's gun, and incoming fire as intense as ever, he thought this was a very bad idea, to stop at that loca-





*Saddam's photo on busy street. Victorious Marines from Miami cruise the maindrag in Saddam's tribal hometown of Tikrit. (right) Sgt. Moreno spotted uniformed Republican Guard Soldiers hiding behind this fuel truck. He engaged with his .50 cal. machinegun setting the fuel truck ablaze.*

tion. He exclaimed into the radio: "If we stop now everyone is going to die!"

Halting the advance at that point would have been like stopping in the kill zone of an ambush.

The Alpha Company Tanks Commander, whose tanks had formed a protective cordon around the vulnerable HUMMVs of Tiger Scouts, agreed, on the radio, with Sergeant Michael. Although his tanks were reasonably safe, with their heavy armor, he knew that the Scouts in their HUMMVs were in danger.

The Battalion commander heeded his warriors' advice and

directed the column to continue forward. The column continued to move slowly down the road.

After braving the 67-kilometer thrill-ride up Iraqi Route 6 through the cites of Ali al Battikh, Al Barghash, Al Aziziyah, and other assorted villages the 2nd Tank Battalion stopped. They laagered in a staggered file along the road where there was no Iraqi resistance. It was late afternoon and everyone was tired from the five-hour-long fight that had just taken place in the city, towns and many villages they had traversed through along Route 6.

The Battalion stopped in a staggered column along the road. In this way they were ready to move out the next day. The route behind was not secure. The route ahead was crawling with the enemy. More of the Al Nida Division lay in wait just down the road. The Marine Tank Battalion had punched through while other Marine units were busy clearing the route behind them. The Marines of 2nd Tank Battalion sat alone and unafraid along Route 6. They were the tip of the spear for the entire Marine Corps.

### Forward Recon

For the Scouts of Tiger Section there was no rest. The Battalion was going to continue toward Baghdad the next day and so a route reconnaissance had to be made. Security had to be put in place for the night. They were given the order to do a reconnaissance forward to the village of Hamid ah Sayyid.

The six vehicles of Tiger Section Scouts were told over the radio to travel down the road roughly three kilometers, and set up security. If they ran into trouble they were told to call, and Alpha Tanks would send some armor down the road to back them up.

Lance Corporal Fabio Manotas, of Miami, Florida, was with Tiger Scouts: "It didn't seem that bad; we're going three clicks up the road. So we're rolling up the road, and nothing happened until we hit exactly at the 86 Easting (a North-South grid line on a military map.) where we started receiving fire, and we just stop.

"Which I don't know why, but we just stopped there in a little herringbone on the road. We took fire from both sides of the road. That's when our lead vehicle, Sergeant Langlois's vehicle, took rounds. Almost the whole front end of his vehicle was hit. His driver, Private First Class Hess, received a round in the window."

With fire from both sides of the road. Sergeant Langlois vehicle was devastated. The entire front end was pummeled with 7.62mm rounds. The radiator, engine block, and even the gun cradle took multiple hits. Fluid and steam flushed







out of holes in the radiator.

A single round hit the driver's windshield. One of the only truly bullet-resistant components of a HUMMV is the windshield. The ballistic glass is composed of a bullet-resistant sandwich around a flexible plastic layer. The bullet smashed through the outer layer and was caught by the stretchy plastic layer.

The bullet caused the material to draw out in a direct path toward Private First Class Hess's face. There it stopped in mid-air frozen in the glass in a pointed indentation inches from the driver's face.

The Tiger Scout Marines returned fire with everything they had: Mk19s, .50-caliber machine guns, SAWs, and M16s. They were only on a reconnaissance mission. They were not expected to slug it out with the enemy. The Marines were stopped cold but they were reluctant to retreat. They continued to fire on the Iraqis to clear their route.

Finally the Tiger Scouts pulled back and met up with some tanks from Alpha Company coming up to help. With their newly reinforced firepower they went right back at the enemy.

Sergeant Benner, of Camp Lejeune NC, spotted a camouflaged BMP about one hundred meters left of the highway.

Lance Corporal Monotas: "Sergeant Benner said over the radio 'There's a BMP on the left — can I fire at it?' Before he says 'can I fire it?' Everyone was like 'Go ahead!' That was a hundred meters off the road. He just fired it, before you knew the blast went off, and he hit on target. I didn't even know it was there. We went up there earlier and didn't see nothing. The BMP must have just pulled out. Sergeant Benner saw the turret turn and he just hit it."

### Cease Fire! No!

Sergeant Benner swung his TOW launcher over and fired,

*Marines of TOW/Scout Miami surround a reporter who was embedded with them. Sheryl Diaz Meyer reported for the Dallas Morning News. (opposite) Jubilant Iraqis celebrate their liberation from Saddam. In spite of the conventional wisdom that Iraqis did not greet American Forces as liberators.*

destroying the Soviet-designed vehicle. The accompanying tanks engaged targets with their 120mm guns. All the Scouts were pouring it on in conjunction with the tanks. The enemy fire seemed to stop, so the command to ceasefire was passed. As soon as the Marines stopped firing the Iraqis got up and started pouring fire back onto the Marines once again.

The Scouts in their HUMMV's started working together with the tanks. The tanks were pretty buttoned-up, and could not tell where the fire was coming from. So the Scouts fired on a target with tracers to identify it to the tanks. The tanks, in turn, directed their heavy firepower to destroy the threat. A building on the right side of the road, which had been a source of heavy fire, erupted from the impact of a 120-mm tank round.

The lead tank engaged a target further down the road, also on the right. A huge secondary explosion ripped flame and smoke through the air. The tanks continued to fire, destroying several more buildings.

The battle continued. The fight was draining the ammo supply. One Mk19 HUMMV went through ten cases of ammo during the fight. Other Marines started running short of the ever-critical 5.56mm ammo.

It was obvious that the fight they were in was pointless. The reconnaissance was complete. They knew that there were plenty of Iraqis waiting for them down the road.

Either more forces would have to come up to take on the



Iraqis massed before them, or they could sit there until the ammo was out. The Scout Marines moved back toward Battalion. On the way back, Sergeant Langlois' vehicle, which had been shot up when the fight started, died. It wasn't going anywhere ever again. The engine block itself had been penetrated with rounds from the fight.

The action at the 86E Gridline had destroyed Sergeant Langlois' HUMMV. Hence a redistribution of men and wheeled assets had to take place.

### Supposedly Armored Doors

Originally Lt. Zummo's vehicle was going to be deadlined. It was missing an antenna and had a huge hole in the rear hatch from the RPG round that had wounded the Scouts' leader. While Tiger Section was engaged at the 86E Gridline, the tires had been removed from the Lieutenant's damaged vehicle and redistributed. The supposedly armored doors, and everything else still useful, had been stripped from the vehicle.

Then Sergeant Langlois showed back up with his vehicle, which clearly was in even worse shape, so shot-up as to be completely dead. The decision was made to strip the Sergeant's vehicle and build Zummo's HUMMV back up again. At least the Scout Commander's vehicle was still drivable. Sergeant Langlois used it to replace his destroyed HUMMV.

Sergeant Michael, the forward observer, was sent back to Panther section. With the Lieutenant's vehicle gone, there was no room left in the forward Tiger section for him.

First Lieutenant Brian McPhillips, who had been the TOW

platoon commander, was placed in charge of the Scout Platoon. The next day he would be traveling with the forward Tiger Scouts. He would be leading the whole Marine Corps toward Baghdad.

Ammo was redistributed. Some of the Amtracks carrying the Grunts of Fox 2/5 had extra 5.56mm and Mk-19 Ammo. Many of the Grunts had been ordered to not expose themselves and so didn't get to fire on the Iraqis much. The turrets of the Amtracks held both a Mk19 and a .50-caliber machine gun. The problem was that the turret was an add-on, it could only shoot to the right side of the vehicle.

The Iraqis were learning to attack from the left, and so the Amtrackers had not burned through as much ammo as one would expect. Some of this excess was given to the Scouts, and some was distributed to some of the TOW sections. Copper Section, which was attached to Fox 2/5, received at least a can of 780 rounds of 5.56mm per vehicle and plenty of SAW ammo.

Other Sections like Bronze didn't do so well. They would start the final drive to Baghdad with about four magazines per man, about 112 rounds of 5.56mm per M16.

That night the Marines watched in anticipation as the supporting arms worked over the Iraqi forces in front of them. All night long artillery boomed. Multiple sorties of jets pounded some targets continuously for as long as forty-five minutes. The Marines of 2nd Tanks could hear Cobra helicopters working up in front of them, in the darkness. They had not seen such an organized and sustained display of fire support since the night they crossed the border into Iraq.







### Ba'ath Party Recruiters

In concert with the fireworks, another show took place forward of the Marines. Ba'ath Party recruiters canvassed the towns ahead. They went through each neighborhood, telling people they had twenty-four hours to join the fight against the Americans, or be put to death.

Many Iraqis were voting with their feet, heading down the road toward the Americans. Groups of surrendering Iraqi soldiers who had shed their uniforms were intermixed with the refugees. The Marines from Headquarters Company spent the night separating them and corralling them for safekeeping.

Sergeant Moreno: "Children, they were giving attention to the children. Especially, they needed water and chow. We had a lot of humanitarian rations as well. They were given food.

"Also the weather was kind of cold that night. So some of

*Just prior to the start of the war some Miami Marines test fired their TOW systems. One missile went long during the shoot and landed in Iraq to the cheers of the assembled Marines.*

those kids they needed blankets. I remember in the morning, when we started rolling, all those kids were wearing poncho liners. I guess the Marines had given them up for that (from their personal issue)."

The mood was one of anticipation — rather than fear — for most of the Marines from Miami.

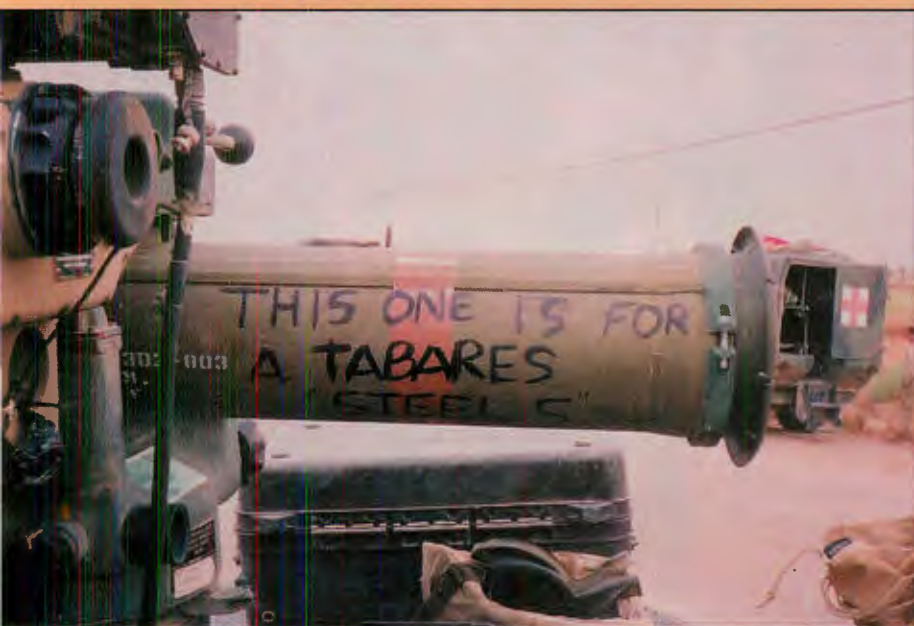
Sergeant Martinez with Copper Section had a brief radio conversation with Sergeant Pavon in Bronze Section. Pavon was really disappointed that his section had not seen more action. Bronze Section had been traveling in one of the safer parts of the column, toward the middle; they had mostly only heard the actions taking place in front of and behind them.

When Staff Sergeant Torres returned from a meeting and informed his Bronze Section Marines that they were going to be in the front of the column the next morning Sergeant Pavon was ecstatic. He was eager for his opportunity to see some action.

Staff Sergeant Torres looked at Pavon, shook his head and said: "Be careful of what you wish for."

The plan for 4 April was to make a final push toward the outskirts of Baghdad. They were close. It was only twenty-five miles to the Iraqi Capital. The Marines planned to camp on the outskirts of Baghdad that evening.

Many of the Marines hoped that the impressive air strikes from the night before had broken the back of Iraqi resistance. People always over-estimate the effect of fire support. For anyone witnessing an intense and prolonged display of supporting firepower, as the Marines had the night before, the natural tendency is to assume it



*This one is for Tabares: Corporal Tabares was shot twice as he defended the rear of the column. The sniper only lived a few minutes longer before he was in turn shot by Corporal Ignacio Yanes.*



has had a total effect.

Many of the Marines from Miami thought that the way ahead would be clear. Some expected light and scattered resistance. Still many other Marines assumed the way ahead would be tough. The fight at 86 Easting the night before, and the fact that they were coming close to Baghdad, indicated that it might not be so easy.

The Battalion moved out in the attack, Tiger Scouts in the lead. Right behind Tiger, Charlie Company Tanks was now the lead company followed closely by TOW's Bronze Section.

#### Four Functioning Tanks

Although Charlie only had six tanks left, they were better off than the next company. Alpha Tanks were down to four functioning MIAs.

The two lead tank companies together were fewer than the normal fourteen tanks a single company is supposed to have. Next came Gold Section, and then Delta Company Tanks, which was still nearly full strength. TOW's Silver and Copper Sections came next, followed by the Grunts of Fox 2/5 who were mounted in their Amtracks. Finally came the Combat Trains protected by Steel Section.

Sergeant Moreno in the Bronze Section explains the plan: "This is now when we knew it was getting hectic. We were supposed to travel through three main towns, one big one, and two small ones. Most of the time we had driven by little towns, including An Nu'maniyah (where they had crossed the Tigris river), which was a small town compared to what we were supposed to go through that day.

"The smallest town was the size of An Nu'maniyah. Even though we see all these refugees and soldiers surrendering, they tell us that during the first couple of miles we aren't going to get any resistance. And then it is going to escalate into a major conflict. Which, obviously our main effort is to bypass this unit once again.

"We were not to become decisively engaged in this battle, but I had that feeling that this was not going to be a good day."

For most of the war Bronze Section had traveled in the middle-rear of the column and consequently had not seen as much action as some of the other elements. Now they were immediately behind the lead Tank Company, and in front of the other two Tank Companies. They began to see action about five minutes after starting out.

Sergeant Moreno: "Instead of just listening, or hearing the noise of the battle as we had done before, we were seeing the explosions and aftermath of the explosions. Now we could see the tanks shooting their guns, main gun rounds going through buildings, exploding."

It was immediately apparent that the forces in front of the Americans were of a higher quality than the forces 2nd Tanks had engaged further south. Previously, most of the enemy tanks had been T-55s, and some T-62s. Now the Marines started to see T-72s. Although the volume of fire had decreased, its accuracy was improving. Various vehicles in the column began to take small-arms hits.

#### Waiting For Us

Sergeant Michael at the back of the column: "Corporal Jean's MGS (missile-guidance set, a large box that is part of

the TOW missile system and sits on top of the vehicle) got hit with fire too. It was like right next to him"

Other vehicles started taking hits in their "jerry" cans attached to the rear of each HUMMV. The snap of rounds passing overhead was closer and more distinct. Some of these Iraqis were aiming their weapons with much more precision than had occurred on the two previous days of combat.

Staff Sergeant Torres was up forward with Bronze Section: "What happened is that we could tell that they were waiting for us. They were often in prepared trenches on the side of the road with oil fires. The thing is that some of them would panic and start to run. As soon as they would get up to run they got shot up by the tanks. The tanks just nailed them.

"The tanks were in a staggered column, and each tank was covering a specific sector. As soon as these guys would get up and run, I mean you could see them running, and the tanks would just walk their coaxial machineguns right up on the guys."

Two American-manufactured M60A1 tanks with Iraqi insignias were engaged and quickly destroyed by Charlie Company's tanks. One of the American-made Iraqi tanks tried to move to defilade and was destroyed. The other was



**SSgt. Torres in front of a captured Soviet MTLB armored personnel carrier. His section was hit heavily outside Baghdad. He was able to extract his Marines for medical evacuation that saved their lives.**

killed before it had a chance to move anywhere. No one knew whether the tanks were Iraqi war trophies from the Iran-Iraq war or had been bought directly from the U.S.A. prior to the first Gulf War.

Iraqi Civilians started to come out on the road, risking their lives to warn the Americans. They would point down the road in the direction the column was traveling and repeat in broken English that "The bad men!" attempting to point out where the regime's Troops were hiding. They had a stake in the fight too. Ba'ath Party recruiters would be coming back to kill them if the Americans lost the fight.

Donald Schutt is a Lt. Col. USMCR. He is a Desert Storm veteran, and former OIC of TOW/Scout Miami. He is an air-line pilot.

Next Month: The rear of the column is attacked. ✂



# Illegals Clean the Pentagon, Drive Trucks Onto Bases, And Enlist With False Documents.

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

# PASS

**I**n the first four parts of this series, we saw how infiltration of our borders by illegal immigrants has turned these no-longer-recognizable boundaries into war zones, and how U.S. citizens are being raped, murdered, and robbed by illegal alien criminals. So, how about our defense and military organizations? Surely, one would think—would hope—that those that we look to for protection are secure from these illegal immigrant incursions. Think again.

“When I was stationed at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico in the Mid-seventies, with the 4449th Mobility Support Squadron, we were tasked with helping the SP’s search for illegal aliens in the West area of the base. Upon our initial briefing, the OSI told us that a small percentage of the ones found on base were Cuban nationals, possibly spying on our installation. Some were actually caught next to aircraft and even hangers! During the last administration it was reported that there were as many as 300,000 illegals a month migrating to the U.S.

“I wonder how many of the ones we have here now are scooping out the country’s related installations and strategic areas for our current enemies?” a concerned SOF reader recently wrote to me.

What’s the situation three decades later?

The *Daily Press* recently reported “Some illegal immigrants, including members of a violent Salvadoran gang, got onto the world’s largest naval base to do construction work, federal investigators allege in court records.

“No charges have been filed and it was unclear how many illegal immigrants made it onto Norfolk Naval Station. A Navy spokeswoman told the *Daily Press* that there is no security problem at the base.

It is that state of denial that has experts concerned.

“Appropriate security measures are in place at all of the installations in the region,” said Beth Baker, a spokeswoman for the Navy’s Mid-Atlantic Region Command. “We continuously monitor those, check those, and they’re appropriate given the current threat environment.”

According to the *Press*, “Court records allege that construction company owners have conspired with people at the base pass office so the undocumented workers may get through the base gates.”

Indeed, the helter-skelter nature of illegal alien infiltration into defense installations has not changed much since the mid-seventies. Illegals are found not only on military bases, but on other high security installations as well.

“I find it really amazing that so many illegal immigrants are working in DOD buildings, including the Pentagon, with security clearances and Pentagon access badges. I see them every day in secure areas of DOD facilities, employed in janitorial and similar functions with security/building clearance badges.

## Terrorists, Spies, and Suicide Bombers

“This could make it easy for terrorists, spies, and suicide bombers to infil-





# FOE!



via Newscom.com/Jane Wooldridge

trate Pentagon security and commit acts of espionage, or worse, assassinate some of our top Pentagon civilian and military leaders. Of course, this is also the case at other federal government agencies presumably including Capital Hill.

"One can only hope that security is a little tighter at the White House," said David T. Pyne, President and CEO of the National Security Interest Organization.

Michelle Malkin, syndicated columnist, obtained a Department of Homeland Security intelligence report that tracked one Raymond Levesque, an illegal alien, who was arrested by U.S. Border Patrol agents, as he drove northbound on I-95 near Houlton, MN. Levesque admitted to operating illegally as a truck driver in the United States for fifteen years. He was freed on his own recognizance, under the current catch and release policy.

The report warned, "Taken as an isolated incident, the violation concerning Levesque could be of minor interest, however, a possible terrorism nexus here is clear... There are, at any given time, several hundred military vehicles on site, and security is non-existent. The fact that undocumented foreign nationals are illegally transporting this equipment throughout the U.S. with access to the Limestone facility and other military facilities also would seem to pose a threat."

The U.S. Army's Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), responsible for contracting surface transportation of military arms, ammunition, explosives, vehicles, and other motorized equipment, refused to respond to queries on what steps it takes to screen frauds, felons, or potential terrorists. "We work very closely with commercial carriers and all defense transportation partners to ensure the safety and security of all of our shipments," MTMC public affairs officer Corenthia Libby informed investigators. "To safeguard these operational security measures I will not elaborate on the details."

Gary Cleaves, general manager of the Maine National Guard maintenance center that refurbishes and ships military Humvees and M109 mobile howitzers, capable of delivering nerve gas rounds and nuclear munitions, gave more detail.

## No ID, No Record

"No identification is required from drivers dropping off shipments at the National Guard site," he told investigators. "The trucking company name, and the truck numbers on government bills of lading, often do not match the trucks actually delivering loads, and no records are kept on who actually delivers shipments."

Previously, according to Malkin's research, Border Agents apprehended a Russian illegal alien with a valid New York State commercial driver's license, driving a stolen Humvee from the Limestone facility. His license allowed him to haul hazardous materials, and he had a pass that granted him access to sea ports along the East Coast — including high-level security-bonded Customs areas. Canadian agents intercepted two other Russian nationals, dressed in BDUs, as they tried to sneak into the United States twenty miles south of Limestone.

"A recent *Denver Post* article reported that over 52,700 non-citizens currently serve in the U.S. military. This number represents more than double the number I had been given last time around," Pyne said in a recent correspondence. "The number of foreign nationals serving in our military equates to 3.7% of the total force. The Army has the highest concentration of foreign mercenaries and infiltrators at about 5.2% of the force."

The U.S. military does not know the citizenship status of over 16,000 active-duty military personnel.

"The Army has the highest number of 'unknowns' - 9,055. The Navy has 6,531, the Air Force 444, the Marines one. Thirty-five thousand, six hundred and sixty-two legal immigrants serve in the U.S. military.

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*Continued on page 57*



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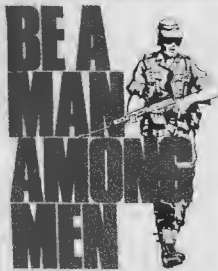
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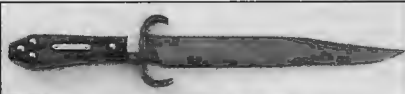
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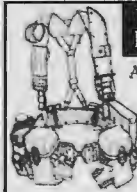
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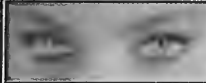
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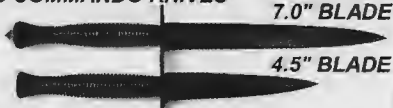
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employer,' this percentage could easily double in the next ten years alone to the ten percent range," Pyne said.

We're already half-way to Pyne's predictions, according to *The National Review*. The percentage of legal immigrants in the military has grown by one-third since 2000. Immigrants now make up four to five percent of total new enlistees, and this trend is expected to continue. Illegal aliens are flocking to recruiting offices after President Bush waived residency requirements for non-citizens on active duty.

The U.S. embassy and its consulates in Mexico have been "besieged by young men wanting to join our armed forces as a way of immigrating" according to the *Review*. Overwhelmed, the embassy posted a notice denying that illegal aliens or residents of Mexico can join the U.S. armed forces.

### Enlistment Shortfalls

"There is the real possibility that defending America will become "work Americans won't do...budget pressures, and high recruitment targets, will create strong incentives for the armed services to cut back on pay and benefits, and hope that enlistment shortfalls can be made up by non-citizens seeking the prospect of accelerated citizenship," the *Review* predicts.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the agency designed to assure internal security, policy is 'hands off'. "If a military branch decides not to prosecute an individual for fraudulent entry, then they are considered eligible to become citizens," Homeland Security spokesman Chris Bentley told the *Post*.

"The law bars employers from knowingly hiring the undocumented, but does it allow employers to continue to keep the undocumented on their payrolls after they discover their illegal status," an outraged Lt. Col. Matthew Dodd, USMC, Senior Editor of *DefenseWatch* fumes.

Military officials were unable to explain the 2003 figures to the *Denver Post*. "Of the number we have that are unknowns, I'm sure that some are citizens and some may not be citizens," said Lt. Col. Stan Heath, spokesman for the U.S. Army Human Resources Command. "We just don't know" how many may be illegal.

"The case of an Army private from Mexico, who enlisted using a fake green card, and then served in Iraq, suggests some of the unknowns could be illegal immigrants. The military has no set procedure for handling these cases. U.S. congressional leaders are looking into the matter," Heath said.

Lt. Col. Dodd's comment on that was, "Someone needs to fire those military officials whose concerns after the 9/11-raised terrorist attacks have resulted in only identifying an unacceptable amount of 'unknowns' in our ranks."

According to the *Denver Post* investigation, some safe-

guards are in place. "Military officials check birth certificates, green cards or Social Security numbers to verify whether new recruits are legally in the country," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jane Campbell, a U.S. Defense Department spokeswoman.

"We're trying to clean up the database to make sure we have a good accountability. We are working on it...I haven't heard of any incident where a soldier of unknown origin has done something to be concerned about," Heath told the *Denver Post*.

Such statements are not encouraging, considering that social security cards, passports and other forged documents are readily available.

Dodd doesn't buy Heath's arguments, either.

"Lt. Col. Heath's complacency about the potential threat posed by undocumented persons in the United States is eerily reminiscent of the mindset that helped permit the 9/11 attacks against our homeland," Dodd wrote.

### Terrorists Or Sympathizers

"What if a foreign country decided to infiltrate our Army with a large number of its own agents? Did you know that China has an organization charged with this very purpose. How many of these U.S. military foreign nationals are in fact foreign agents or terrorist sympathizers?" Pyne said.

"Shouldn't we require naturalization before enlistment?"

Don't we want an army of citizens rather than aliens?" demands the *Review*.

"Newcomers should earn the right to serve in the armed forces by first formalizing their relationship with the United States. Why would we expect a foreigner to 'bear true faith and allegiance' to our Constitution, rather than his own?"

"We should go to any length to avoid developing a kind of mercenary army, made up of foreigners loyal to their units and commanders, but not to the Republic. By limiting military service to those who have already become citizens, we are less likely to face instances of desertion and treason."

Although Sgt. Asan Akbar, the Muslim convert who killed two of his comrades in a grenade attack in Kuwait, was not an immigrant, the *Washington Times*, according to the *Review*, reported that U.S. officials fear

more attacks from the 4,000-plus Muslims, many of them immigrants, in the armed forces.

"The threat of illegal aliens in our country and in our military is serious, and so is the unnecessary risk of literally being stopped dead in our complacent tracks," Dodd warns.

"If they're willing to risk their lives for America, shouldn't they get citizenship?" is the question often asked, according to the *Review*.

The question should be, "Who are they willing to risk their lives for, and if not for America, who and how many do they plan to take with them?"

*Dr. Martin Brass is an international lawyer longtime SOF contributor.* ✕

## DEATHS IN IRAQ

STATISTICS DO NOT SHOW CITIZENSHIP

- Killed in Action: 540
- Died later of Combat Wounds: 129
- Died while Missing in Action: 8
- Died while Captured: 3
- Deaths by Accident: 205
- Illness: 33
- Self-inflicted: 34
- Homicide: 6
- Total Enlisted: 873
- Total Warrant Officer: 34
- Total Officer: 93
- Active Duty: 812
- Total Reserve: 188
- White: 699 (71.4%)
- Black: 120 (12.3%)
- Hispanic: 114 (11.6%)
- Other: 46 (4.7%)
- Male: 977 (97.7%)
- Female: 23 (2.3%)



# Down For The Count

## Ten Years In An Afghan Slam!



REUTERS/Ahmad Masood

DR. MARTIN BRASS

**F**ormer U.S. Special Forces trooper Jack Idema, 48, and Brent Bennett, 28, former Army air controller, were sentenced to 10 years in an Afghan jail by an Afghan three-judge panel. Edward Caraballo, 42, a photojournalist filming a documentary about Idema's anti-terrorist mission in Afghanistan was sentenced to eight years. Four Afghan accomplices were sentenced to one to five year terms. The fifteen-year-old Afghani accomplice cried.

Presiding Judge Abdul Baset Bakhtyari issued the unanimous verdict after a 7-1/2-hour session, according to AP.

The U.S. team was charged with entering Afghanistan illegally, of holding a private jail, and of kidnapping and torturing, and faced up to 20 years in prison.

The days preceding the trial were an emotional roller-coaster ride.

Caraballo's defense lawyer, Robert Fogelnest, told the press that Afghan prosecutors offered to drop the charges if the U.S. ambassador requested. "But the prosecution told the press that the offer was a 'misunderstanding,'" according to AP.

The trial went forward despite desperate pleas by the U.S. legal team, John Edwards Tiffany and Robert Fogelnest, for U.S. intervention. They said they had written to ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad requesting his intervention. A U.S. embassy spokeswoman denied being aware of the request, but said she would look into it. Obviously, the requests were ignored.

### Kangaroo Court

The fear of the lawyers proved to be justified.

*Former U.S. Green Beret Jonathon Keith Idema lights a cigarette while waiting to hear an Afghan court delivers its verdict, in Kabul September 15, 2004. Three Americans were sentenced to up to 10 years in jail after being found guilty by an Afghan court on charges including torture, running a private prison and illegal detention.*



They said that evidence had been withheld and the accused did not receive proper translations of the charges against them, according to Reuters.

The trial was "mired by chaotic procedures, dismal translation and constant outbursts from Idema. Scant evidence was produced, and there was little cross-examination." (AP)

"This entire proceeding 'doesn't meet international standards and should be halted,'" Fogelnest said during trial, but he was cut off by Bakhtyari, "Come to the point, if you have any arguments," the judge said.

From the time of their arrest in July, the counter-terrorist freelancers had insisted that their mission had the blessing of both the Afghan and U.S. governments. Both governments denied those assertions.

Videos shot by Caraballo played at trial allegedly confirmed cooperation with Afghani government officials, according to BBC.

Idema was shown being "greeted warmly" by the airport director upon arrival in Afghanistan in April 2004. Other officials appear in the video, including chief of Kabul's police force, General Babajan. Gen. Babajan never acknowledged being present when they arrived in Afghanistan, or greeting them.

"It's ridiculous to claim they entered illegally under these circumstances," defense lawyer Robert Fogelnest said.

The video showed the interrogation of Ghulam Sakhi, brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden's former head of security, Daud. Fogelnest said that in response to an offer to be relocated to the United States, Sakhi agreed to have an electronic device implanted in him that would lead to his brother-in-law. Fogelnest complained that Sakhi has not been made

available for defense questioning.

"So one might conclude that if you have an informant whose brother-in-law was the chief of security for Osama bin Laden, who is now working for you, it's not unreasonable to claim that you were very close and hot on the trail of Osama bin Laden," Fogelnest said. (Reuters)

Idema had told AP that he had unearthed a plot to bomb the U.S. military base north of Kabul and assassinate Afghan leaders.

Ted Kavenah, former CNN creator, said that if the video evidence proved these claims, "this conviction and sentencing on the narrow charges brought is a massive display of ingratitude by the Afghan government and its judicial system, as well as the U.S. government that failed to come to the aid of the American defendants."

"This can only have been staged by the U.S. government - we were an embarrassment," Mr. Caraballo said at the trial.

Idema claims that he has been tortured in jail and Caraballo had bruises consistent with being beaten on the soles of the feet, according to his lawyer. He said the men were being held in very poor sanitary conditions and were living six to a small cell.

Idema, wearing his customary sunglasses and khaki fatigues bearing a U.S. flag, denounced the proceeding as a throwback to the times of the hard-line Taliban movement.

"It's the same sick Taliban judges, the same sick sense of justice," Idema said as he was led, handcuffed, out of the courtroom.

"I knew that the American government wasn't going to help me," he added.

An appeal is planned. We'll keep you posted. ✕

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# NAVY DOES







# AT WAR

BY PAUL AVALLONE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
LCDR JOHN LOVE, MD

## *Shock Trauma Platoon 9 in Iraq*







*STP-9 and members of its replacement STP as well as Black Hawk medevac crew. The STPs worked closely with the Black Hawk crews to medevac patients from their field hospital tents to the surgical companies in the rear. LCDR John Love is above the flag at the corner where the blue meets the stripes. LT Deb Ruyle is the blonde female left of him. (below) Lieutenant Commander John Love, MD, displays a captured AK during operations on the Iran border.*

**I**t was early stages of the Iraq war, March 2003, and Navy Lieutenant Commander (O-4) John Love MD was doing the opposite of what a doctor is supposed to do. He was attempting to kill people, to take lives, instead of treating them, saving lives. Near the front of a Marine supply convoy, his shock trauma platoon (STP-9) was in the kill zone of a firefight, and Doc Love was firing his only weapon, a Beretta M9, at the blurred, moving shapes of black-robed Fedayeen fighters in the buildings along both sides of the road.

That Love's STP-9 was caught in an ambush is a case of the fog of war, not mistakes: Accidents are failures in command. This was a case of the Iraqi battlefield not being clearly defined like those of big 20th century World Wars; A case of the lead Marine and Army assault forces driving so rapidly toward Baghdad that pockets of the enemy were bypassed or dispersed but not wiped out. A case of those enemy pockets waiting for a chance to strike at the support convoys that were to follow the assault forces. A case of employing the newly created STPs as close on the heels of the attack forces as possible to provide near real-time life-saving trauma care.

That's where Love and STP-9 was then—attached to a 150-plus vehicle logistics convoy held up just south of An Nasiriyah, a city that just days before had been taken against some significant opposition. The word finally came down to move up closer to the front. They'd have to go through An Nasiriyah first. Final movement instructions: Have weapons locked and loaded, ready to engage the enemy. The entire city was considered a free-fire zone, and any Iraqi seen could be shot, no questions asked. Lastly, if the convoy were to be hit, a small ambush or large, the operational plan called for everyone to keep moving, not stop and fight, and simply race through the contact.



A LAV platoon had joined the convoy for fire support. Four LAVs per platoon. The vehicles are eight-wheeled, and, of the seven Marines of the crew, one mans the fixed 25mm machinegun, one on the M240G and two guard with M16s the flanks and rear from the twin shoot holes on the stern roof.

Doc Love and the 20-odd members of STP-9 felt a little more comfortable about to enter a free-fire zone with the LAV platoon along. A shock trauma platoon is small — two emer-



courtesy of Marine Sergeant Robert Mendoza

*The Marine LAVs that were the security for the convoy that was ambushed in Ash Shatra.*



gency medicine doctors, one physician's assistant, one ER nurse, and a handful of corpsmen and Marine Corps drivers.

It hadn't been STP-9's first time riding into hostile territory. The first night of the war STP-9 went in with the 7th Marine Division, crossing the line of departure as a part of what Doc Love called "a five-thousand vehicle convoy." STP-9's nurse, Lieutenant Debbie Ruyle RN, remembered that night as, "Pitch black. We had no lights on, no running lights—you couldn't see right in front of you. Less than half the vehicles had 'nods [NVGs—night vision devices], so you didn't know if you were following the right vehicle." She admitted, "I was scared. I was thinking, 'What do we do if we get lost?'"

### We Have Met The Enemy... And He Is Us

STP-9's ambulances quickly became stacked with severely injured. Not from actual combat, ironically; rather from motor vehicle accidents. Adding to the fact that it was difficult or impossible to see and stay in order, everyone had been up for more than two days—pre-invasion tasks and nervous energy—and drivers were falling asleep behind the wheel and driving off the roads or just running into other vehicles.

To get helicopter medevacs for their full load of patients, STP-9 raced to the head of the convoy, seeking out what had been briefed would be a fuel point, where helos could land—its grid coordinates programmed into their GPSs. There was nothing except empty desert at the supposed location, so, thinking their coordinates might be off kilter, STP-9 continued. One kilometer. Two. Then five. Still nothing. Totally alone and obviously too far ahead of the convoy, they figured they were at risk of being mistaken as the enemy and becoming the victims of friendly fire, in particular, from coalition aircraft, so they turned around and headed back. Sure enough, back at the spot where the fuel point was supposed to be—the original grid coordinates—that's exactly what was being set up—a refueling station. STP-9 slung up their radios, called in medevac and got that



*LT Deb Ruyle, RN, and HMC "Chief" Beckley treat an Iraqi male who had been shot in the leg. The man had walked into a police station and murdered several officers with an AK-47. A quick reaction force responded, tracked him down and he was shot in the leg, then brought to STP-9 for treatment.*

night's casualties out.

Days later, and now the STP vehicles—two ambulances, two humvees and two seven-ton trucks—were interspersed from vehicle #10 to #20 of the long convoy, heading now across the bridge and into Nasiriyah. Every third convoy vehicle or so had a radio and NVGs. If there were going to be action, this would be it. Fingers were on triggers, thumbs on selector switches. And nothing happened. Nothing. The city was dead, not an Iraqi in sight. Just Marines in fighting positions, it seemed, at every corner.

As the convoy came out on the other side of the city, the rest of the trip was considered to be safe, and the order was passed down that everyone was to go to Condition 3. That is,



*Gunsite Training: Marine LTC Joe Knapp (L) and Navy Doc John Love (R) put two rounds quickly into targets from close range.*



*Gunsite Training: Moving from cover to cover, John Love gets down quickly to fire at targets.*





*An eleven-year-old girl struck in the head by an AK-47 gravity round had been taken to a local hospital that had no supplies or surgical capability. Transferred to STP-9, she was put on life support and then transported to a fleet hospital ship. Her appreciative father gives the thumbs-up.*

weapons on safe, magazines in, but no rounds chambered.

Doc Love and the rest of STP-9 sighed with a sense of relief. With a wife waiting at home in San Diego with their three girls — 8, 7 and an infant of 8 months at the time — Love didn't want to think about not making it back home someday. It seemed an eternity ago he'd joined the Navy as an enlisted man, then he'd gone to college, then to medical school, earning a highly coveted spot at USUHS. That's, the Uniform Services University of the Health Sciences, in Bethesda, Maryland. It is the med school for all the armed services. And acceptance there is a fierce competition because, first, the medical education there is as good as or better than the best in the country and, second, it's free. Better than free, the students get paid for attending, as junior officers. A service obligation follows graduation and internship, but that's more than a fair price to pay for not being saddled with the debt of six-figure student loans.

Doc Love chose the field of emergency medicine, which in the case of combat just about ensures that a Navy emergency physician will be on a ship (at sea), at a surgical company (far to the rear of combat), with a Forward Resuscitative Surgical Hospital (mobile units, 44-member teams established between the front and the surgical companies), or as one of the two physicians on an STP (near the front).

The other emergency physician on STP-9 was Commander Lou Orosz MD. He and Love had been emergency medicine residents at the Naval Medical Center San Diego, then they practiced together at the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton just prior to Iraq. In the convoy through An Nasiriyah, both were in the STP's ambulances—Doc Orosz in convoy vehicle #10, Doc Love in #20. The RN, Debbie Ruyle, was riding shotgun in one of the highback humvees between them. Through the city now and apparently in safe territory, everyone was a little more relaxed—in Condition 3, remember—moving the 20 kilometers north to the town of Ash Shatra. Just before reaching Ash Shatra, the LAV platoon took the lead to enter the town.

### And then, The Ambush

About 30 vehicles into the city, and the convoy got hit. RPGs and AKs firing from the buildings that were set back on both sides of the road. Interviewed a year afterward, Doc Orosz remembered seeing the black puffs of smoke of overhead explosions and thinking they reminded him of anti-aircraft fire from scenes from black-and-white war movies of his childhood. He saw the black forms of the enemy fighters in the windows of the buildings and even the flash of an RPG firing. The LAVs were now returning fire, and Orosz did what isn't normal for medical doctors to do, in war or peace—he raised his M16 and fired at the dark figures in the buildings.

Behind, in his ambulance Doc Love was doing the same, but with his 9mm pistol. STP-9's physician's assistant, Lieutenant Tom Dernbach, was firing the M240G machine gun from the turret of the seven-ton truck ahead, and Love watched as an Iraqi was cut in half as a result of the Dernbach's accuracy. Dernbach had been a Senior Chief Corpsman with Marine line units prior to being commissioned as a Lieutenant, and had had extensive field experience in both the Gulf War in 1991 and Somalia. Medically the PA for STP-9, for all the convoy movements he was the M240G gunner.

## LT Deb Ruyle, RN

**NO** one forced Deb Ruyle (pronounced "rule") to be a part of a shock trauma platoon and thus ride into combat. Just the opposite, the STPs are handpicked from physicians and nurses of the Navy medical battalions. Ruyle could just as soon have stayed in the relative safety of the battalion hospitals in the rear, but she had worked with Docs Love and Orosz before, during their emergency medical residencies, and she'd trained with them at Gunsite. "I'd go anywhere in combat with them," she said.

About SOF being interested in Ruyle and her STP, "It meant a great deal to many of us to have our story told the right way," she said. "Nobody thinks of medical as also being military. But we are right there with the Marines."

At 33, Ruyle is still single, and perhaps too busy right now to settle down with a husband. She was promoted to lieutenant commander (O4) in August and is getting set to start a master's program in emergency medicine nursing.

Sorry guys, SOF is not at liberty to give away her current duty location. — P.A.





Docs Love and Orosz, as well as Deb Ruyle, had attended (with a number of other doctors and nurses who would eventually make up the STPs) a specially-designed Tactical Medicine course at Gunsite Shooting Academy prior to deploying, and Love credits the training with saving their lives. "It wasn't just the tactical skills we learned, but maybe even more important, the confidence we got in the weapons and in reacting to fire. We were more psychologically ready to shoot back when the firing started, instead of looking around, in shock, wondering, 'Are we being fired at? Should we be firing back?'"

Deb Ruyle admits to being one of those who reacted slowly to this first firefight. She had been at the Marine forward hospital at Camp Rhino in Afghanistan during the combat stage of that war, but Rhino was secure and she saw no combat there. She had attended the Gunsite training, which she called "the best military training I'd ever had." She had never fired an M16 prior to Gunsite, and for every convoy from the beginning in Iraq she'd traded her pistol for one. Even still, in spite of her familiarity with the rifle, with the real RPGs and rounds coming in now at the start of the firefight, unsure and scared, she curled up in the passenger seat of her humvee to be as small as she could be, even telling the corpsman driver that she didn't think she could shoot. He was driving, he couldn't shoot, and he urged her to lay down suppressive fire, and after another moment of hesitation, she brought up her weapon and blasted away at the muzzle flashes she could see coming from the buildings on her side. For one whose profession is to heal not to hurt, she would recall a year later that as she was shooting she was grateful that she couldn't see distinct human forms in the shadows where she was shooting. And shoot she did. Before the day was done, she would not be able to recall how many magazines of 5.56 she went through.

### Hot Steel And Ironies

The fog of battle makes for ironies. For one, when the ambush began, the lead elements of the convoy stopped to engage, rather than, as was previously planned, to rush through. They would start again, go ahead, and stop. Doc Love remembers the LAV platoon commander and the convoy commander arguing over the radio whether to continue forward or turn back, which was the LAV platoon commander's desire, so as not to bring the entire convoy into the firefight. Add to that, the radio net was filled with troop chatter from the middle and rear elements of the convoy who, so far back, were not even aware that the forward elements were in combat. "Someone was stomping on our traffic," Love explained, "asking, 'Hey, has anyone got MREs? I'm low on MREs.' And someone else asking if the truck with the MREs had changed its flat tire." Others broke into the radio net to relay—usually in excited, pitched voices—that their vehicles were taking fire.

The fog of battle irony Number Two: Doc Orosz's M16 jammed three times. He needed to oil it to get it to fire, and he had kept it oil-free before because, with the chronic sand of the desert, oil and sand made the weapon unusable. And of course, graphite lubricant wasn't available for a "non-combat" medical unit, the STP.

Irony Number Three: The enemy's fire—RPG, AK and crew-served—was almost hilariously inaccurate. And many of the RPG rounds were duds. Love still visualizes the two RPG rounds that flew right over the hood of his vehicle and the one that hit the vehicle just ahead of him that was, "Thank God, a dud."



*Group photo of some of the personnel who deployed from Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, where all (except LT Thom Dernbach, kneeling, far right) worked in the Emergency Department. A physician's assistant, Dernbach worked in the Orthopedic Department at NHCP and was STP-9's expert M240G-gunner on convoys. Standing, LCDR John Love MD, is in the middle, flanked by LT Deb Ruyle RN, and CDR Lou Orosz MD. Next to Orosz is LCDR Mike Nace, an emergency medicine specialist nurse. Kneeling at left is HM3 Nick Ramos, presently back in Iraq assigned to a Marine combat engineer team, co-located for a while with John Love, who proudly reports that Ramos "was knocked to the ground twice by an IED, recovered and provided care to the wounded. On other engagements he held a critical bridge despite several hours of heavy mortar fire and treated several injured. Also repelled a small arms ambush on another occasion with his 9mm."*

Number Four: In the fits and starts advancing through the ambush, through the radio debates of whether or not to turn back, the LAV platoon came upon an open spot and turned around to go right back through the ambush again, retreating. The good part, when Doc Love and his STP crews saw the LAVs coming at them, though surprised to the point of mouths-agape disbelief, they turned and followed, and this time there was no hesitating in the kill-zone, as all the vehicles raced through it and out the other side.

Once out of the town again, the convoy headed back down toward An Nasiriyah, where the entire convoy regrouped just north of that city. The convoy commander called in more fire support—another LAV platoon and two Cobra attack helicopters. The Cobras went ahead to destroy the ambush positions and returned to refuel and report only partial success: the Enemy was pretty well dug in and an ambush was assured. As the convoy approached Ash Shatra a second time, now with double LAV security ahead and twin Cobras above, time had been lost, with dusk going fast and night coming on.

### Repeat, Until The Iraqis Get It Right

It was one thing riding into Ash Shatra the first time, when no one expected trouble. There is a measure of bravery in how one reacts to a life-and-death threat that comes by surprise; Perhaps a better measure is how one reacts when knowing you're riding into that threat. As was STP-9 now, near the front of the convoy. No one was at Condition 3 this time around, that's for sure. Rounds were chambered, fingers ready on triggers.

The nighttime firefight STP-9 now hit might simply be best described by Love's, Orosz's and Ruyle's impressions.

*Continued on page 74*



# UPGRADING THE MP5

*Mission-Specific Innovations Can  
Make HK's MP5 Better than Ever!*

**W**ith more agencies continuing to adopt the concept I call "SWAT On Patrol," properly trained tactical officers no longer leave their special equipment locked in the station, but take it with them on their normal tour of duty. As highly trained first responders, these officers have the ability to assess critical incidents from the outset and carry out their primary mission that is always to *stop the killing and stop the dying*.

The tactical officer's most important piece of equipment is a shoulder weapon that offers target acquisition and accuracy not available from a handgun. This gives the officer the time and distance needed to provide cover and make a critical shot without having to get closer. Although many of the special weapons used by police SWAT units are selective fire, they are almost always best deployed using semi-automatic fire. This is important not only to avoid wasting ammunition, but also for reasons of accuracy and liability.

Aside from the configuration of shoulder arms as purchased, they can usually be improved by aftermarket improvements from a variety of sources. So widespread is this add-on list that it amounts to a literal smorgasbord of accessories that can easily lead the customer astray. With resources usually being limited, it is important that accessories will enhance a weapon's performance rather than its looks, and it is equally important to know the difference.

*Here the MP5 uses KMC's RAS and foregrip along with an Eotech Military/Police Red Reticle Sight mounted on the KFI Low Profile M1913 rail mount.*

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON





SEOTech

POLICE



It's no secret that I prefer a rifle-caliber weapon such as the .223, but others opt for a pistol-caliber SMG or carbine, such as the HK MP5. It's also true that many of the below products work perfectly with a number of tactical shoulder arms, but let's examine some valuable upgrades with the HK MP5 SMG in mind.

### **Knight's Mfg. Co.**

A major supplier to the Military, Knight's Mfg. Co. (KMC) in Vero Beach, Florida, also offers aftermarket improvements for the HK MP5 SMG and other models including the .223-caliber HK53. One of them is the Rail Adapter System (RAS), and this clever H&K innovation comes into focus for one important reason: All H&K roller-locking shoulder weapons in the G3 family have totally free-floating barrels. Such weapons include the G3 (HK91, G33 (HK93), HK53, MP5 (HK94) and all variants. Although some users may not have been aware of this, the handguards of these weapons are mounted to the front receiver ring and to the rigid cocking handle housing, leaving the barrel totally free floating.

The basic H&K design left the perfect platform to design a multi-mission M1913 rail system to replace the issue handguard. Consisting of a tough, ventilated aircraft-alloy housing, the RAS positions into the standard handguard recess ring in the front of the receiver and locks there via a setscrew. The front of the RAS secures to the front of the cocking handle extension using a hex bolt and nut instead of the pushpin, insuring that the RAS becomes one with the tube and receiver without touching the barrel.

Since the arrangement of the non-reciprocating cocking handle precludes a top mounted rail, the RAS for the MP5



*Housing a rugged ghost ring, XS Sight Systems' HK Rear Sight is rugged and fully adjustable. Note the marred finish on this well-used MP5 before it was redone.*

consists of full-length rails at 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock. Equipped with standard MilSpec M1913 cross notches, these rails accept KMC's quick detachable (Q.D.) handguard panels to accommodate a variety of KMC accessories. Included among them are sling mounts, light and laser mounts, and a vertical foregrip, but similar accessories are also available from other sources.

### **Falcon Industries**

Similar to KMC's vertical foregrip is a brand new one from Falcon Industries, of New Mexico. Made of tough, light-

weight polymer, this grip attaches to the bottom rail with a hex bolt instead of being hand tightened. The grooved Falcon Foregrip can be used to hold a pressure switch by rolling "O" rings over it to keep it in place. A piece of bicycle inner tube also works well. Falcon also makes standard and low-profile handguard panels for all M1913 rails.

### **SureFire Tactical Weapon Lights & Accessories**

The most advanced manufacturer of fighting tactical lights in the world, SureFire makes a myriad of light systems compatible with the M1913 rail system. One of these, the Millennium Universal (MU) System, amounts to a family of lights from 6- to 12 volts providing from 65 lumens to 350 lumens of blinding white light. Offered with either wing nuts or A.R.M.S. ThrowLever mounts, MU lights can be had with single or dual end caps, allowing pressure-cap or remote activation, or both. The remote pressure switch can be used with a variety of vertical foregrips including the new Tango Down Grip from Buffer

*The C-More Reflex Sight is another optic that goes well with the MP5. Here its new matte-black Gun Kote finish is apparent.*







*As viewed from the left side, the MP5 is seen with its Giles Tactical Sling, Falcon Low Profile Handguard, and Magpul magazine protector. (below) Using unique cam levers, Meprolight's Reflex Sight fits tightly on the KFI Low Profile rail.*

Technologies, with its special recess for the switch.

State-of-the-art is SureFire's M900 Tactical Light. Being integral with its own vertical foregrip, the M900 not only provides either 125 lumens or 225 lumens of blinding white light, it also gives the operator superior control. Equipped standard with two tiny LED blue lights, the M900 also allows the operator to activate only these lights, to see the way to a critical entry point without sacrificing security by using the full white-light capability.

These blue LED lights work extremely well with the naked eye and are more efficient when used with night vision device (NVD) goggles. However, SureFire will furnish these LED lights in red or infrared (IR) on request, the IR being for use in total darkness with NVD goggles. Using a single A.R.M.S Throw Lever mount, the M900 will mount on any bottom M1913 rail.

Brand new from SureFire is an aircraft alloy M1913 Forend for the MP5 (and HK 53). Containing three M1913 rails, this high quality forend mounts to the gun using a rocking yoke that connects to the cocking handle tube at the front using the standard handguard cross pin. Once so installed, a hex bolt is then tightened to push the rail system tightly into the rear handguard-ring of the receiver. This not only preserves the free floating of the barrel, but guarantees maintaining zero movement. SureFire's M1913 Forend comes with its own low-profile handguards that are similar to those from Falcon Industries.

#### **Dark Parts Handguard Panels**

After working for Knight's Manufacturing Company as an analyst, David Luke designed and patented a new design in handguards for M1913 forend rail systems. Called Dark Parts, these panels consist of a tough synthetic liner with overmolded rubber, with their own sliding cross piece to lock them in place. Available in a variety of lengths, Dark Parts handguard panels are very comfortable, and do not transmit heat. Since

neither the RAS nor the SureFire M1913 rail forends contact the MP5 barrel, heat is not much of an issue. Currently offered in basic black, Dark Parts will soon be available in tactical colors, along with a new vertical foregrip through Excalibur Arms, of Florida.

#### **Giles Tactical Sling**

Available for the MP5, HK53 and other H&K products is the Giles Tactical Sling, the best tactical sling going for the MP5, in my opinion. Available from Wilderness Tactical Products, the Giles Tactical Sling was developed by former





Phoenix P.D. SWAT Training Officer, Giles Stock. While this sling is based on H&K's own Universal Sling, it is wider, quiet, and made of black Nylon. Using Giles Stock's improved guidelines, his MP5 Sling is best deployed by reversing the shoulder over which it is hung, or "American style."

### A.R.M.S.

Designed by Mr. Richard Swan, of A.R.M.S., Inc., the now MilStd M1913 rail, often, but erroneously referred to as the "Picatinny" rail, was conceived as the ideal Weaver-type rail in the late 1980's. I know, because Mr. Swan consulted with me during its design. In conjunction with the M1913 rail, Swan designed the A.R.M.S. ThrowLever mounting system already mentioned above. Years ago Mr. Swan also redesigned and improved the HK mount that attaches to all H&K roller-

pact M1913 rail mount for the MP5 and H&K rifles. Called the Low Profile Mount (LPM), this one is made of aircraft alloy, and mounts right down on the integral base of the receiver using four claw-like locks. The LPM accommodates virtually all of the short reflex sights.

### XS Sight Systems

One item of special interest is the new HK Sight System from XS Sight Systems, of Fort Worth, Texas. Consisting of a protected ghost-ring style aperture rear sight and several choices in tritium-powered dots or white-line front sights, these iron sights offer fast target acquisition and should be high on the list of improvements to consider on any HK MP5, HK53, HK33 or HK91.

### Aimpoint

Needing no introduction is the Aimpoint Comp M2 and ML2 Red Dot Sight. Now standard issue with our SpecOps forces in the Global War On Terrorism, the Aimpoint Comp M2 has an adjustable bright-red dot with no parallax for extremely fast target acquisition out to 300 yards or more. It is happiest on our MP5's mounted in an A.R.M.S. #22M68 ThrowLever Mount. The M2 is also night-vision compatible, and both models are waterproof to 60 feet.

### Eotech

Another reflex sight that has caught on in a big way with both the Military and law enforcement is the Eotech Military/Police Sight with its red reticle. Adjustable for brightness, the M&P model also has two settings for use with night vision, and is submersible to 60 feet.

### Trijicon

Well known for its ACOG and other Reflex Sights, Trijicon has introduced a new red reticle model. Called the Tri-Power, this sight actually has four power sources to include tritium, fiber optic, battery, and Cyalume mini-light light stick. Never needed, the battery has a 10-hour life span and the Cyalume mini-light stick, 14 hours. In any ambient light the fiber optic provides plenty of illumination for the bright red chevron reticle that is sharp and clear. Made of tough carbon fiber, the Tri-Power is one of the lightest optical sights going, and uses the same A.R.M.S. #22M68 mount as the Aimpoint Comp M2.

### Meprolight Reflex Sight

A relative newcomer to the reflex sight business, Meprolight now offers an enlarged optic with a bright amber triangular reticle powered by tritium and fiber optic. Using a unique set of camming levers, this sight will mount rigidly onto any M1913 rail.

### C-More

Also in use by special units in the U.S. Military is the C-More Reflex Sight. A very open sight, the C-More's bright-red dot is fully adjustable and is easy to acquire under stress, offering great peripheral vision at the same time. Like all of the above sights, it mounts quickly onto any M1913 rail,



*The Gambi Magazine Loader is seen here with the MP5 magazine along with the Magpul protective device.*

lock shoulder arms mentioned here, and furnished the mount to H&K. Called the G-3/MP5 NATO Universal Top Scope Mount, this all-steel platform is now offered in five styles to accommodate virtually any optical need. All of these mounts allow the open sights to be used in an emergency, and all of them clamp rigidly on the MP5.

### First Samco

Offering lightweight polymer mounts, First Samco makes QD light mounts for popular size tactical lights, and a QD vertical foregrip, both of which fit M1913 rail systems.

### Insight Technology

Insight Technology manufactures high intensity tactical weapon lights and lasers for the Military as well as law enforcement, nearly all of which mount directly onto any M1913 rail system. Lightweight and waterproof, Insight's lights can be had with remote pressure switches and in light/LED or light/laser combinations.

### MFI Low Profile Mount

Brand new from MFI, Inc., of Liberty, Kentucky, is a com-



including the Low Profile Mount from MFI, Inc., above.

### Gambi Loader

New from World Wide Ordnance is the Gambi Magazine Loader. As well made as it is designed, this loading device quickly fills the 9mm MP5 magazine, at the same time preventing injured fingers. Gambi Magazine Loaders are also available for a variety of other magazines, and WWO also makes gun racks.

### MagPul

One of the handiest devices made is the MagPul. Offered in a variety of colors, this soft polymer cap not only facilitates removal of the magazine from the pouch, but also protects it from damage if dropped, even if fully loaded. I wouldn't be without a MagPul on my MP5 magazine, or any others it is offered for.

### KG Industries

While the MP5 is nearly indestructible, during routine duty a firearm's finish normally suffers. Such was the case with the MP5 SMG shown, which had seen service with a law enforcement SWAT Team. Since it remained near new on the inside, we decided to make it look that way on the outside again, so shipped it to KG Industries, of Hayward, Wisconsin.

It came back with a matte-black, Space Age Gun Kote finish even tougher than its original factory finish. I recommend KG Industries finish highly, and an array of colors is available.

### DSA

Brand new for the MP5 are a number of M1913 rail forends, optical mounts and buttstocks made by Brugger & Thomet, of Switzerland, and imported by DSA, Inc., of Barrington, Illinois. A 3-rail alloy forend and a synthetic bottom rail forend are offered, as well as two lightweight low-profile optical mounts, one especially for the Aimpoint Comp M2. Lastly are two new folding stocks, one designed for use while wearing a riot helmet with face mask, or a gas mask, and the other a UMP type stock designed for the MP5.

Currently in service with hundreds of law enforcement agencies across America, the HK MP5 can now be upgraded to configurations that will meet mission-specific needs with accessories that promise to take these guns well into the future. Although H&K is now producing the UMP9 as a possible replacement for the MP5, the latter is still available new to law enforcement agencies from Heckler & Koch, or in used excellent condition at a great price from dealers such as Operations Practical Systems, of Sandy, Utah, (Dept. SOF, 9460 South 545 West, Sandy, UT 84070, phone: 801-562-0072 [opsguys.com]). ☒

## CONTACT SHEET

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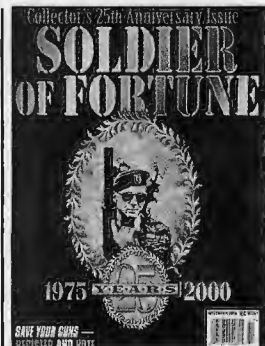
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Continued from page 65

With all the tracer fire coming from the buildings on both sides of the road, Orosz thought it looked like the Fourth of July. Watching the volume of fire coming at the vehicles ahead, Love thought his STP companions must surely all be dead. Ruyle was less scared than amazed, watching the tracers cross the road from both sides, thinking, "How are we going to get through *that*?" She'd filled magazines before and knew that tracers were one in every three or five bullets. With the high angle of the tracer fire, she thought that the guys in the turrets were going to get wiped out.

Orosz watched as an RPG round came straight at him then bounced harmlessly off the hood of his vehicle, within touching distance. With the Cobras firing into the buildings while hovering right over the STP vehicles, Love had a torrent of 20mm shells rain down on his roof. Orosz went temporarily deaf from the explosion of a Cobra's rocket into one of the buildings. Love credits the Cobras with breaking the back of the enemy. That, and that the convoy pushed through this time without hesitation.

Well north of the town the convoy stopped to regroup. The tally: a half-dozen vehicles destroyed, a few Marines wounded, one KIA. STP-9 was wholly intact. And for Docs Love and Orosz and RN Ruyle, it wouldn't be the first and last firefight. In the coming weeks, their shock trauma platoon would engage in six more.

*A former SF NCO who first wrote for SOF about his experiences in Afghanistan, Paul Avallone is a frequent contributor.* ✕

## Epilogue

**A** year later, by March 2004, Lieutenant Commander John Love was back in Iraq. He wrote us: "We are operating in the Sunni Triangle. Initially we were south of Baghdad. Mortar and rocket attacks were a common occurrence. The area was full of IEDs. I moved three weeks ago. The convoy in front of us was hit hard. We passed seven burning fuel tanker trucks. That night we were ambushed with small arms fire while moving north. I had an M16 and we suppressed the fire and pushed through. I have seen a lot of trauma at the current location. Several mass casualty situations. I notice a difference in the enemy's willingness to fight. The ambushes are coordinated and they are willing to stay and fight."  
— P.A.



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## Bulletin Board

Continued from page 17

29. Free speech entitles one to own newspapers, transmitters, computers, and typewriters, but self-defense only justifies bare hands.

30. The ACLU is good because it uncompromisingly defends certain parts of the Constitution, but the NRA is bad because it uncompromisingly protects certain parts of the Constitution.

31. Charlton Heston, a movie actor as president of the NRA, is a cheap lunatic who should be ignored. But Michael Douglas, a movie actor as a representative of Handgun Control, Inc., is an ambassador for peace who is entitled to an audience at the UN arms control summit.

32. Police operate with backup within groups, which is why they need larger capacity pistol magazines, as opposed to 'civilians' who must face criminals alone and therefore need less ammunition.

33. We should ban "Saturday Night Specials" and other inexpensive handguns because it isn't fair that poor people have access to self-defense guns too.

34. Police officers have some special Jedi-like mastery over handguns that private citizens can never hope to attain.

35. Private citizens don't need a gun for self-protection because the police are there to protect them, even though the Supreme Court says the police are not responsible for their protection.

36. Citizens don't need to carry a gun for personal protection, but police chiefs, who are desk-bound administrators who work in a building filled with cops, need a gun.

37. "Assault Weapons" have no purpose other than to kill large numbers of people. The police need assault weapons. You do not.

38. When Microsoft pressures its distributors to give Microsoft preferential promotion, that's bad; but when the Federal Government pressures cities to buy guns only from Smith and Wesson, that's good.

39. Trigger locks do not interfere with the ability to use a gun for defensive purposes, which is why you see police officers with one on their duty weapon.

40. Handgun Control, Inc., says they want to "keep guns out of the wrong hands." Guess what? You have the wrong hands.

41. Ballistic fingerprinting works so well, that of the 19,000 ballistic fingerprints available in the Maryland database, not a single one has helped solve a crime committed with a firearm.

42. Rosie O'Donnell doesn't think that a firearm is necessary for self-protection. Which is why her personal bodyguards have handguns.

43. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) thinks that a concealed carry permit will not help prevent personal crime, which is why she has one.

— Courtesy of Paul S.

### *Iraq, Our First Thousand Lost: Figures and Factoids*

Killed in Action: 540

Died later of combat wounds: 129

Died while MIA: 8

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Died while POW: 3  
Deaths by accident: 205  
Illness: 33  
Self-inflicted: 34  
Homicide: 6

### Deaths by Pay Grade:

E1 - 1, W1 - 1, E2 - 64, W2 - 22, E3 - 184, W3 - 6, E4 - 282, W4 - 5, E5 - 163, O1 - 15, E6 - 119, O2 - 19, E7 - 38, O3 - 43, E8 - 14, O4 - 10, E9 - 8, O5 - 6. Total Enlisted: 873; total Warrant Officer: 34; total Officer: 93.

Active Duty: 812  
Total reserve: 188

White: 699 (71.4%); Black: 120 (12.3%); Hispanic: 114 (11.6%); Other: 46 (4.7%); Male: 977 (97.7%); Female: 23 (2.3%).

### Top 10 Active-Duty Home Stations:

Camp Pendleton, CA: 105; Fort Hood, TX: 86; Fort Campbell, KY: 77; Fort Bragg, NC: 58; Fort Carson, CO: 44; Fort Stewart, GA: 42; Camp Lejeune, NC: 40; Fort Riley, KS: 38; Twentynine Palms, CA: 34; Fort Lewis, WA: 25.

Almost half of the first 1,000 to die have been either E-3s or E-4s. Almost half of the 1,000 were younger than 24. Nearly three-fourths of the deaths have been caused by enemy action or devices. Reserves/Guardsman make up 18 percent of the deaths. More than 70 percent of those who have died were white. Despite fears that an all-volunteer force would end up putting minorities at greater risk than whites, the military death toll is distributed proportionately among America's racial and ethnic groups.

### Coasties to get SIGs

SIGARMS has been awarded \$4.2 million pistol contract from the U.S Coast Guard, the second contract to a major federal law-enforcement agency, and comes hot on the heels of a \$23.7 million pistol contract awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in August. The Coast Guard will be replacing their Beretta 9mm pistols with the SIG P229 Rail that features the DAK™ trigger system and is chambered in 40 S&W.

SIGARMS has expanded operations at its Exeter, New Hampshire, facility with the addition of several new state-of-the-art CNC machines increasing production capacity by more than 25%. ✕

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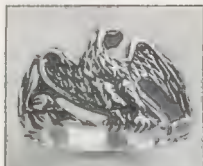
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## Team Shark Rocks!

Continued from page 22

A common tactic among insurgents, and other fighters, is to draw attention away from the main ambush, to catch the undisciplined off guard. The key to surviving this tactic is common sense, to stick to your assigned sectors, even under fire, except when absolutely necessary.

I was covering the four to seven o'clock from the rear vehicle, with my AK-47. Cyborg had the seven to twelve o'clock, and Craftsman covered the twelve to four o'clock. Eight to ten rounds of AK fire erupted from the nine o'clock area. Usually this kind of fire comes from a drive-by in the opposite lanes, to distract the target and signal the main ambush down the road we are coming.

Everyone performed as rehearsed, and stuck to his assigned sector. We knew there was more to come. Less than a minute later, and from the opposite side of the road, they hit us. On the radio I heard "Contact three o'clock ... AK-47 and RPG!"

Four to six men, most with head coverings and one without, popped up like prairie dogs along a berm to our three o'clock, and about 75-100 meters out, three to five armed with AK-47's, and one with an RPG.

### Center of Mass

The RPG gunner had on a grey or dark green "man dress", or long shirt, which extends to about the knee or shins, and a similar-colored head cover concealing his face. This description is still vivid due to his weapon seeming to be pointed to my center of mass.

Approximately four of the men with AK's engaged our convoy with automatic fire, while the RPG gunner stayed in a crouched position, so as to get a steady bead on our vehicles. Shark and Cuda, in the lead vehicle, engaged the targets with M4 fire.

Shark hit the first AK gunner, and he crumbled. He bragged about this feat of marksmanship for days. Cuda, also firing, put down the heads of the rest of the shooters and the RPG gunner.

As my vehicle came through the kill zone the remaining three baddies trained their weapons our way. Still covering the rear, I heard Craftsman call out, "AK's and RPG at three o'clock." Then came the piercing sound of his M4.

I swung around to the three o'clock position, and noticed one baddie

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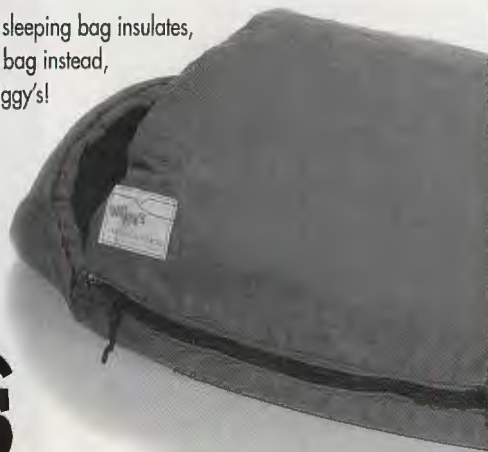
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standing on top of the berm, aiming and firing his AK on auto, in our direction. To his right the RPG gunner crouched, the RPG on his shoulder, aiming in on our vehicles. Dirt kicked up all around the unlucky individuals on the berm. It was fire from the lead vehicles, and Craftsman.

I immediately engaged them with my AK, sending most of my love to the RPG-wielding individual. Windows by the third row of an SUV do not roll down. So when I squeezed the trigger, sending the first round of a ten-round burst through the window, it sent fragments of glass flying outside the vehicle and some into my lap.

We were still moving at about forty-five mph, which led me to change my fire to my four to five o'clock. Two five or six-round bursts out the window sent glass flying again, and probably caused permanent ear damage.

The last burst was suppressive fire, to keep their heads down until we were out of the kill zone. I put the RPG man in my sights, and then all I saw was glass and gases escaping out the window. A last scan of the area while we were getting out of Dodge showed the berm clear of bad guys. Whether any of them lived to sucker punch someone else I do not know.

Back at camp we counted our ammo. The SOs in the lead vehicle expended about twenty to twenty-five rounds apiece. Craftsman dumped thirty rounds, and I sent out twenty-two rounds. We fired more than one hundred rounds on four to six ambushers in less than one minute.

After the second attempt on our lives in one trip the Big Man Upstairs pulled us out with only a handful of bullet holes in some of the vehicles. I believe that if not for quick and overwhelming fire the RPG gunner would have gotten his bead on us, and let loose with his rocket-propelled grenade, causing disaster for our team.

At the end of the day we accomplished the mission, and returned to base camp safe, with only minimal damage to equipment, and no loss of life. All in all, not a bad start to a new job.

*This article is dedicated to Shark, who was taken from us in an IED attack on our team south of Mosul. Rest in Peace, my brother, and we will see you on the next mission.*

*Phil Otto is a Security Operator. He is a former Marine combat instructor, and a former policeman. ☒*



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**The Guns Of Jim West**

Continued from page 27

"Bear" bullet at 2200 fps with about 40 inches of penetration from an 18-1/2 barrel. By comparison, the .50 Alaskan uses the same Kodiak bullet design in a 450-grain weight running around 2000 fps. Its cartridge is .348 Winchester brass that is drawn out to .50 caliber then trimmed to a OAL of 2.1inches.

A great deal of thought and testing went into the final design. The guns of Jim West have a functional appearance, and they are accurate, rugged and reliable. And when all that stands between a big predator and his breakfast is you and a firearm, all you really need are the bear necessities.

John Higgs is an NRA, and Colorado POST, certified Firearms Instructor and a graduate of Yavapai, Gunsite, and DTI firearms training schools. ☒

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# High Speed, Low Drag

Continued from page 41

Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va. Each crew rotates on a tour of duty of 90- 115 days. Considering that this catamaran is just about the fastest ship in the Navy, it follows that it will often be operating without support vessels to provide defense.

As a result of lessons learned from Swift's predecessors, the new design also provides this cat with teeth and claws in the form of a MK 96 stabilized rapid-fire 25mm gun at the bow, remote controlled EX-45 stabilized gun system in either 40mm grenade, .50 cal or 7.62 NATO machine gun in the stern, and additional crew-served weapons to defend against close-in boat threats similar to the water-borne suicide bombers who attacked the USS Cole. The Swift also has a helicopter pad, and has capacity to carry two UH-60 or two CH-46 choppers. Although the twin hull design does not fare particularly well in rough, open seas, in its role of supporting the Navy's Littoral [shore-line] Combat Ship (LCS) program, it has found popularity. It is particularly effective in fast dashes through shallow coastal regions, and its high cruising speed allows it to reach almost any maritime location in the world within about 10 days.

One of the salient features of the HSV concept is the flexibility of the design to be quickly and easily reconfigured through the use of modular assemblies to various mission-specific requirements. For example, in its Mine Warfare Configuration, Swift would take on four helicopters, an additional 60 personnel, and trailer living quarters to house those personnel. Other planned configurations include: Anti-Terrorism Force Protection, Medical Support high-speed hospital ship, and Forward Operating Base for Marine Security and SEAL Team missions.

Fast, agile, and with great load-bearing potential, the HSV program is gaining lots of fans in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps as another way in the post-911 world to take the fight to the enemy — thanks in part to the ancient Polynesians.

*John Higgs is a frequent contributor to SOF, an NRA and Colorado POST certified Firearms instructor; a graduate of Yavapai, Gunsite, and DTI firearms training schools, and a longtime student of military history.*

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## Flak

Continued from page 12

more meat and less fluff. I do not read SOF to be persuaded but to be informed. Thanks.

Mike

## And Thanks for Writing

My primary complaint with SOF is the occasional dropping of text over the introductory photography. For those of us doing battle with our eyesight, the typeface and contrast can make it nearly unreadable. My most significant additional issue would be with the occasional impression coming from the text of, "we know more than you do but won't tell you because we'd have to kill you." It's never wrong to tell the reader that the subject is still open, the article is just a broad overview or that there's more to come. The problem arises when the text can be interpreted as patronizing. Case in point is the article on the MRP. Yes, there is more to come, that's implicit in the technology itself and the limited descriptions in the article. The reference to secrets yet to be revealed struck several coworkers as being unnecessary.

To give the readers a better understanding, I would like to suggest adding more detail of the individual (personal) tactics used. This may take away from the readability of the articles for some of us, so you may want to consider this idea with a dose of restraint. Thanks for listening. Great magazine, and very informative.

*We would never knowingly patronize our readership: It is to them we repeatedly go when we have questions we cannot answer.*

## Here's the Plan

I enjoy reading SOF magazine when I can get it as I am disabled and a veteran on limited disability income. I try to get it after all bills are paid which sometimes I go for 2-3 months with out but it is an excellent informative mag especially on weapons and terrorism updates.

Alan L. Ingold

*Alan, have you thought about convincing your barber to subscribe? Can't think of a better place to read a good magazine than a barbershop.* ☒

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# War Without The Spin

BY OLIVER NORTH

Last week, our nation mourned the 1000th U.S. death in Iraq. The Kerry campaign and the so-called mainstream media pounced on the report with partisan furor, using the “milestone” as “proof” that the war in Mesopotamia is going wrong — and that it’s the fault of George W. Bush.

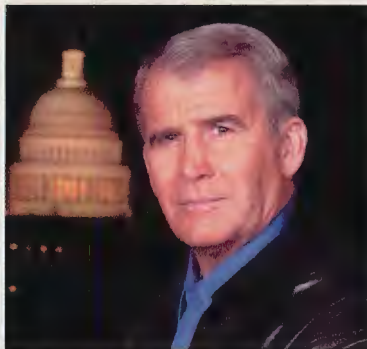
On the campaign trail, Sen. Kerry complains that President Bush has failed to “take the target off American troops.” His campaign operatives talk anonymously on background about “equipment deficiencies,” a “lack of body armor” and “deeply diminished morale” among our troops. Meanwhile, The New York Times, gloomily reports that, “In the past five months, the Americans have relinquished control over much of Anbar and Salahaddin, provinces that include cities like Ramadi and Fallujah, where the guerrilla insurgency churns on with unabated intensity.” What’s going on here? Are we really losing the war in the bloody, scorched streets of Iraq?

Those are just some of the issues I went to investigate with a FOX News “War Stories” team. On this, my fourth trip to Iraq in the last 18 months, we were embedded with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, assigned to the 1st Brigade of the U.S. Army’s 1st Infantry Division. These units are part of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force — posted in Al Ramadi — the capital of Al Anbar Province — the largest in Iraq and in the heart of the so-called “Sunni Triangle.” Here’s what we found wrong with the Kerry-media spin:

- “... Americans have relinquished control ...” Notwithstanding press accounts to the contrary, no U.S. commander has “relinquished control” over the capital or the province — which stretches from the western suburbs of Baghdad all the way to the Saudi, Jordanian and Syrian borders. As our cameras documented, U.S. soldiers, Marines and increasing numbers of Iraqi National Guardsmen are very much engaged in countering those who would prevent Iraq from ever becoming a democratic country. And despite terrorist efforts to disrupt reconstruction efforts and attack Iraqi civil infrastructure, U.S. Army, Navy “Sea Bee” and Marine civil affairs officers continue to open new schools, electrical facilities, water plants, hospitals and police stations.

- “... the guerilla insurgency churns on ...” There is no doubt that the level of combat has increased since I was last in Iraq in April and May. Bombings, ambushes and indirect fire attacks against coalition and Iraqi government forces have multiplied because the militant sheikhs and imams who foment the fighting know their day is done if the Iraqis successfully hold a democratic election next year. Their only hope is to cause enough casualties that we withdraw before the ballots are cast, so the closer we get to that election, the greater the violence.

But this is no “guerilla insurgency.” By definition, “guerillas” or “insurgents” represent an organized political alternative to an established regime. Radical Sunni and Shi’ite cler-



ics like Muqtada Al-Sadr, who tortured and killed 200 men, women and children, and buried them in a mass grave in Najaf, don’t promise to make things better for the Iraqi people. Nor do the remaining Baath Party warlords or foreign extremists like Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. These men inciting gunfights in Iraq aren’t “insurgents,” they are anarchists. They offer no unified “platform” other than “jihad!” When they aren’t shooting at coalition or Iraqi security forces, they are trying to kill each other.

Dangerous? Yes. A “guerilla army”? No.

- President Bush has failed to “... take the target off American troops ...” Kerry should take a few minutes on Sunday evening to listen to some of the scores of “American troops” I interviewed in Iraq just a few weeks ago. They tell a much better story than Dan Rather — and it would give the Massachusetts senator an idea of what combat is really like. Not one of them complains about being a “target.” Instead, they all believe that the terrorists are the “targets” — and explain that they would rather fight them in Iraq than here.

- “... equipment deficiencies,” a “lack of body armor ...” What are these people talking about? Watch “War Stories” this Sunday and see if Marine Capt. Mark Carlton, wounded by an enemy RPG — and alive because of his body armor — would agree. The same goes for the troops. All those I was with certainly seemed to be well enough equipped to survive terrorist I.E.D.s and fight back — using some of the best technology and equipment in the world — weapons, UAVs, helicopters, communications ... and guts.

- “...deeply diminished morale...” Where? In the Kerry camp, maybe. But not in Ramadi, Iraq. The best barometer of troop morale is the re-enlistment rate. It’s been that way since Valley Forge in 1777-78. When things are going badly and morale is down, so are extensions and re-enlistments. But in the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines that we documented in Iraq, so many Marines have asked to stay in the service that the battalion commander, Lt. Col. P.J. Kennedy, has had to request a waiver from established limits.

Unfortunately, the pessimists in the press — “reporting” from hotel balconies in Baghdad using videotape bought from Arab cameramen traveling with the enemy — rarely get out in the field to see any “good news.” Candidate Kerry ought to know better, but he retains the same “blame America first” mentality that has governed his thinking since Vietnam. From what I’ve seen firsthand, the Kerry-media spin of a bloody disaster for the United States in Iraq is as phony as Dan Rather’s documents.

To find out more about Oliver North, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

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